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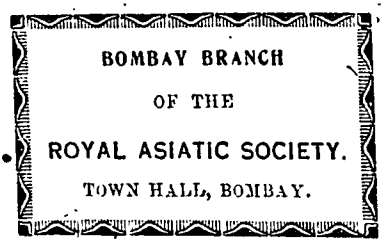

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WHAT I SAW OF THE WAR

AT THE BATTLES OF

SPEICHERN, GORZE, & GRAVELOTTE

A NARRATIVE OF TWO MONTHS' CAMPAIGNING

WITH THE

PRUSSIAN ARMY OF THE MOSELLE

58729
&c.

BY

THE HONBLE. C. ALLANSON WINN

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WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
EDINBURGH AND LONDON
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PREFACE.

In publishing the following pages, I have endeavoured to give an account of a residence with the Prussian army somewhat out of the beaten track of newspaper correspondents. Indeed, during the time I sojourned with the Prussian army, I only saw two; one cautiously making notes behind a poplar at the battle of Gravelotte; the other was my companion, to whose discretion, as an officer formerly in her Majesty's service, the Prussian authorities trusted. They, however, did not permit him to follow their army as a correspondent, but winked at his occupation when they found that he wrote nothing that could betray their plans; indeed, I have reason to believe that at first many of his let-

ters were opened. He obtained his permission as follows: On presenting himself to General von Göben, who commands the 8th Army Corps, then situated at Saarbrück, and handing in his card, the General, observing that in the corner of it was written Special Correspondent to ——, immediately remarked to him that, as an old soldier, there could be no objection to his following the army, but as a correspondent it was quite out of the question. General Göben then suggested he should introduce himself with a plain card—thus early evincing a friendliness which he afterwards showed on all possible occasions—and the *erlaubniss* was granted.

I had far greater difficulty in obtaining my pass, as kind-hearted General von Göben could not understand what amusement or profit a young man and a civilian, unless corresponding for a journal, could derive from scenes of bloodshed; and it was not until I told him plainly (knowing, as I did full well, that in this world there is no greater lover of honesty and straightforward speech than a Prussian officer) that

though having by nature a great fancy for soldiering, as an only son I had been dissuaded from giving fortune another chance against me in the game of life and death; and my object was not to witness the "slaughtering of vast hosts of Prussians," as he grimly suggested, but to seize the present opportunity of making myself practically acquainted with soldiering. He smiled somewhat sadly. Perhaps he had an only son about to engage in the deadly struggle, and was thinking how glad he would have been had the English custom prevailed in Germany. Anyhow, he kindly bade me go to his *etât* Major, who made me out a pass. I had not been in possession of this precious document more than an hour, when a proclamation was posted to the effect that from that time *no one* would be allowed to follow the army except by the King's own permission.

I need not say that I could scarcely have hoped for an *erlaubniss* in that quarter, with no better excuse than I had presented to General von Göben. Many poor German corres-

pondents, whose very daily bread depended upon a permission to follow, were at this time turned back; and I remember one poor fellow in particular who eyed my bit of paper greedily, telling me that he had a wife and many little mouths to feed at home, and could get bread for them if he were only permitted to share the privations of the campaign. German correspondents, I may state, are not paid quite at the same rate as ours.

These remarks I have made to show that I have a reason for the supposition that this volume may contain some anecdotes and details that have been hidden from the penetrating eye of the Press; otherwise I should be deserving of the name of something worse than an egotist if I supposed that, with my total inexperience of writing, I could make palatable to the public a dish that had been served out to them by the journalists every day for the last five months.

BRUGES, *Nov.* 1870.

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MAP, ... *End of Volume.*

MUSIC, ... *Do.*

WHAT I SAW OF THE WAR.

CHAPTER I.

I WAS at Kreuznach with my wife when the first noise of this war made itself heard. If I remember rightly, it was on the 1st of July that I read in a paper at the Kursaal how Count Bismark was accused in the French Senate of attempting another *coup*, and how the French nation rebelled universally at the idea of having Prussian influence on their southern as well as their eastern boundary.

It is not my intention here to enter upon a discussion whether the strong ebullition of feeling that made itself manifest among the rulers of the French people was justified by reasonable fear for the safety of their country; but I propose in the following pages to afford to those who are willing an opportunity of

reading an account of some of the sad scenes which came under my observation during a sojourn of two months with the 8th Prussian Army Corps. It must not be supposed that we had no bright times; but they were as minutes compared with hours. If any of my readers would question me as to what pleasure I can take, or what object I can serve, by awakening the memory of past pains, I make answer that it is my hope that the recording of sufferings which have directly flowed from acts of heroism may be the means of doing justice to the many whose worth, by their loss, I have learnt to value.

Great was the panic at Kreuznach among people of all nationalities at the first reports of angry words between the Cabinets. Naturally the French were the first to flee, then went the Americans, and finally the English; so that a few days after the exodus had commenced, our watering-place was reduced from a population of some 10,000 to perhaps as many hundreds.

War, however, had not yet been formally declared; and a party of fifteen English held stoutly to the idea that France could expect no more from Prussia than the concession that had been made—viz., the withdrawal of the Hohenzollern candidature; and that consequently there would be no war. News at

this time we had none, canards plenty. So one day—it was on the 17th of July—I determined to put an end to the state of anxiety we were all in by journeying up the valley of the Nahe to Saarbrück, making friends with the commandant of the town, and from him learning whether war were really imminent. When my intention became known I was commonly considered mad—at best an eccentric Englishman; for it was generally supposed that not only had war been formally declared, but that the French had actually crossed the frontier, and were proceeding rapidly down the valley of the Nahe, then wholly undefended. Regular traffic by railroad had already ceased. Trains had commenced to pass in sight of our windows at the Holland Hof towards Coblenz, crammed with blouses—stupid-looking country bumpkins, soon to become smart and intelligent soldiers of the finest army in the world.

We started at seven o'clock P.M., the train being due at Saarbrück, some seventy miles distant, at eleven o'clock. We did not arrive, however, until two o'clock A.M., owing to the perpetual stoppages at different stations on the loop lines, to let the long trains full of mobilising men pass us; for we were running on a single line.

At Saarbrück Station we found a small detach-

ment of the 40th Hohenzollern Fusiliers quietly unloading ammunition and stores; but not a sign of the invader was here. After a good night's rest, or rather after four hours of sound sleep, I breakfasted at half-past six o'clock, and immediately repaired to the commandant of the town, colonel of the 5th Lancers.

He was a fine-looking man, and was there with a battalion of his regiment for purposes of forepost duty. When we called upon him he was going his rounds, and so we did not see him till later, when he rode up to the hotel with another fine-looking old Prussian officer, then lieutenant-colonel of the 40th Regiment. The latter we could not help remarking for his commanding and stern appearance, with which was pleasingly contrasted an amiable manner,—common characteristics among Prussian officers. "What, sir, do you want?" said the colonel of Uhlans. I told my wishes,—how that at Kreuznach there were many invalids, and that I was anxious to learn if the French were really marching down the Nahe. He made no objection to "my seeing what I could see," as he expressed it, but did nothing to facilitate my movements. Not so the colonel of the 40th Fusiliers, a battalion of which regiment was on outpost duty in the vicinity of Saarbrück. He entered into friendly

conversation in the coffee-room of the hotel, and ended by offering to send me round with his captain of the day to all the outposts that came under his special supervision. Not content with this courtesy, this dear old warrior (for he has since become to me as one who had occupied for years a place in my heart) insisted on my drinking with him and his officers, after *table d'hôte*, several bottles of the best champagne he could find in the town. He also explained to me with his own hands the drill and mechanism of the *zündnadel-gewehr*.

Great amusement was caused at the table by the following trifling incident:—In the morning I had seen, at a cutler's opposite, a very handsome *coutcau de chasse*, a very formidable-looking weapon. I purchased it, and requested the shopman to send it to me, as at such a time I did not wish to be seen carrying weapons. Great was the laugh, then, when the waiter placed this by my side in the middle of dinner, the officers remarking that the English had early taken up arms with the Prussians. Dinner concluded, the captain's horse was brought round, and we set forward on our tour of inspection. About a mile outside the town, on the road to Sarreguemines to the south, we came to the section of a company of the 40th Foot. They were put through a species of parade,

and we continued our route, meeting occasional patrols of two soldiers.

About two miles farther on we arrived within a thousand yards of the frontier, and there found the most advanced forepost, consisting of about thirty Uhlans, who had to furnish patrols for the immediate vicinity. I made the acquaintance of two very pleasant officers, who showed me their maps, and explained their position. They expressed much wonder at the French not having taken any aggressive steps, as at that time the Prussian frontier was almost wholly undefended. In Saarbrück, for instance, there were not more than one battalion of lancers (Uhlans) and one of infantry. Having ascertained that all was well, we commenced our return.

We had not proceeded more than a quarter of a mile when a patrol, consisting of a corporal and two privates of the line, doubled up to the captain, and said something to him in German, the meaning of which I did not quite understand. The officer, however, soon enlightened me by saying—"Sir, I regret to leave you, but scouts announce the advance of the French towards Saarbrück from the direction of Forbach, and I must ride on." Feeling, however, that I did not care to be left alone under existing circumstances, I was induced to accompany him "at the double."

When we arrived at the spot where in the morning we had seen the picket of the line, we found that it had already been called in; and just as we neared the town, hearing a galloping of horses behind us, we looked round, and saw the Uhlans whom we had just left trotting in to mass with the rest of their battalion. These had also come into Saarbrück from different isolated foreposts. They presented a fine appearance, and, as they all had in their hands, instead of their lances, revolvers cocked and dressed, a disagreeably business-like feeling came over one. In the town all the shops were shut, and great consternation prevailed.

Having accomplished my object, I hastily packed up my traps and went to the station. On my way I passed the Lancers going over the river towards Forbach to reconnoitre. By the greatest piece of good luck I found one of those immensely long trains, composed of coal-trucks, luggage-vans, and horse-boxes, used to convey the German labourer to his uniform, just about to start. I made a spring into the first waggon that I saw, which happened to be one of the aforesaid coal-trucks, tumbled on my nose in the black dust, picked myself up, and thanked my stars for my good fortune in catching a train at all.

My star, however, was in the ascendant, and I must

recount two more pieces of good luck, one emanating from Prussian honesty and the other from Prussian *bonhomie* and *politesse*. I trust they will excuse me for making use of French words when eulogising two of their chief characteristics. About ten minutes after I had made my leap into the truck, a rough and by no means intelligent-looking person in a blouse, whom I may term—for there were some eighty others—*a* companion in coal-dust, held out to me a valuable ruby-and-brilliant ring, which had been on my finger, to my knowledge, a short time back. He also tendered me a cigar, that was wholly unrecognisable from the fact of it being crushed nearly into snuff, telling me that, having seen them fall from my hand when I climbed into the waggon, he had picked them up, but had only just been able to make his way to me through the other companions in coal-dust. The ring fitted my finger loosely, which accounts for my not having missed it at the time. He refused, in the most uncompromising manner, to receive any gratuity whatever for this remarkable display of honesty.

This little incident was scarcely over when I happened to catch the eye of a staff-adjutant, who was hastening about the platform. Guessing at my nationality, I suppose, he asked, from the platform, of me in the coal-dust, as far as I could make out, what

I wanted. Now, I can understand and speak little or no German; and as he was in a hurry, I had no time to tell him by signs that I was anxious to relinquish my seat in the coal-dust for one in a more comfortable position. There were two first-class carriages to the train, for the use of officers, and also a special staff carriage. He had to leave me, and I jumped out of my truck, determining to attack the position occupied by the subordinate part of the staff. I was repulsed at first, with considerable loss of pride; but my friend the adjutant, coming up at that moment, divined what I wanted, and, in a most courteous and unexpected manner, led me off to the special staff compartment, where I was politely welcomed by two generals, neither of whom could speak my language. I only mention this last piece of good fortune as an example of the every-day courtesy that an Englishman, conducting himself as a gentleman, receives at the hands of Prussian officers.

We talked as well as we could a sort of hybrid of English, French, and German—beginning a sentence in French, going on in German, and winding up perhaps with an English word. Even thus early there were signs of discontent as to the course England was pursuing—or rather the Government of England—in not keeping a tighter hand on our Birmingham

gun-makers and Newcastle coal-merchants. One of the generals expressed his sure opinion that now that the King of Prussia had done everything in his power consistent with his dignity to avoid the war, England would join the Germans in case France still wantonly insisted on fighting. "For," said he, "with your fleet and our army France will surely come to reason; you will then have been the means of averting bloodshed, and without cost to yourselves you will have obtained much honour and thanks among continental nations." I begged him not to be too sanguine, as England for some time had been decided in her policy of non-intervention.

I did not add that many maintained that the course adopted by the party now in power indicated the opinion that national prestige was hardly an equivalent for the expenditure; but I found it difficult to defend the conduct of our Government in the many conversations I afterwards had with both French and Prussian officers of high rank. From several French generals, and on many occasions, I heard the same statement—namely, that a firm protest on the part of England at the outset would have prevented the war.

I shall never forget the speech of a wounded major of the Imperial Guard at Gorze: "My friend," he said, "looking at this sad war as I do now

from my bed of sorrow, I see that I, with my thousands of compatriots, have been laid low—sacrifices to the ill-timed arrogance of our rulers, and, thanking you as I do from my heart for your kindness, I can never forget that you belong to a nation who refused to make use of one of the greatest privileges that belongs to a strong power—England refused to enter the one firm protest which would have put a stop to a war, the declaration of which was not based on one sound or justifiable reason." Such was the text of his remarks, and I felt, as I listened to his words, like one whose brother or near relation had become a criminal.

But I have digressed too far from my friends in the saloon. We left Saarbrück at six o'clock P.M., and at two o'clock A.M. we arrived at Kreuznach. Such was my introduction to the Prussian army.

Here it may be interesting for those who are not initiated, to know the constitution of a German regiment. Each is composed of three battalions; every battalion numbers 1050 men rank and file, and is commanded by a major. The battalion has four companies, and each company has over it a captain, who thus commands in the Prussian army some 250 men, and occupies a much more responsible position than a captain in our service. Attached to the four

companies also are four first-lieutenants, eight second-lieutenants, and under (*unter*) officers answering to our non-commissioned officers. Over the whole regiment there is an oberst-lieutenant, or lieutenant-colonel. Further on I will give an account of their daily mode of living, commissariat, &c.

One word only about the 40th, the Hohenzollern Fusilier Regiment, which, as has been seen, was the first specimen of Prussian infantry that I met. Since then it has earned for itself the name of *the fighting 40th*, having been three times in action during this bloody war. The 2d battalion has lost all its officers; and though I have frequently met the regiment during the campaign, I have only found one of the hospitable friends that I met with at Saarbrück, and have scarcely dared to inquire for the others. Almost before the war commenced, this gallant regiment sustained a severe loss by having their kind-hearted and able oberst-lieutenant, Von Henning, transferred to the command of the 33d Fusiliers.

The alarm that I had witnessed on the 18th, I understood from the telegraphic department at Kreuznach the next day, was caused by some trivial attack made by the French on some of their own peasants who were endeavouring to bring their horses across the frontier to the Prussian depôt at Saarbrück.

CHAPTER II.

I TOOK my wife and three other ladies away from troubled Germany, and having seen the latter off for England, and settled my wife in Belgium, returned with as much haste as I could, with the intention of joining the Prussian army at Saarbrück. This I found to be a much harder matter than I had at first anticipated. However, thanks to, in great measure, the assistance given me by a British officer, who even under that denomination had met with some small difficulty in obtaining an *erlaubnitz* or permit for himself, I succeeded in getting a pass from General von Göben, to carry me without let wherever went the 8th Army Corps.

I shall pass over the immaterial skirmish which took place on the 2d of August. It resulted, as most of us know, in the evacuation of the town of Saarbrück by the Prussians, who at the most, to my certain knowledge, did not muster more than 1500

strong. They never had the slightest intention of holding the place, and loud was the laughter among the Prussian troops when the French accounts of the "taking of Saarbrück" appeared in the German press. People who were not present cannot be aware of the absurd exaggeration contained in the report. The French troops did not occupy Saarbrück for many days; they were not ready to advance, and the town, lying in a valley, is not suited for defence—so they retired to the heights of Speichern.

Speichern is a small village lying to the south by a little west of Saarbrück. It is situated in a valley, and separated from the above town by a range of steep and wooded hills; on these hills the French were then posted.

I said that I would pass over the skirmish at Saarbrück; but there is one anecdote that I must relate before we proceed on our way towards Gravelotte. There was a young Prussian under-officer standing in a rather exposed position at one end of the bridge near the station; the French tirailleurs were at the other, keeping up a brisk fire. Most of the Prussian soldiers had retired, and he was begged to follow. "No, no," said he, "not till I've had a good shot at one of those fellows." At last he took steady aim at one of the enemy, who had repeatedly fired at him, and fired; the

Frenchman span round and dropped on one knee. "Now," said the young Prussian, "I will leave them." He could not have been more than seventeen years old.

Nothing of particular interest occurred in the next few days at this point. Of course I heard of the defeat of part of M'Mahon's army by the Crown Prince at Weissenburg.

This brings me in my narrative to the 6th August, when occurred the first serious fight in which our army took part—the taking of the heights of Speichern and the village of Forbach by the Prussians. Our troops, to storm this position, held by a French division under General Froissard, had to march across a valley some 1200 metres wide under the most galling fire.

The heights may be described as consisting of three tiers, so that being driven from one, the French retired to the next, and finally to the crest. Fortunately for the Prussians, the French were left by their generals with a most inadequate supply of artillery, one of the many unaccountable mistakes which have marked French generalship as a main cause of the disasters to the Imperial armies in this campaign.

The Prussians commenced their advance with only one or two regiments, and were of course conse-

quently at first repulsed; but bringing up fresh troops and artillery, they renewed the attack with the most superb courage and coolness. Foot by foot, yard by yard, up they went, not in line with a cheer and the bayonet as in old days, but in skirmishing order; and thus waged the fight through the day, and at night the French, finding themselves outflanked on their right, and fearing to be surrounded, abandoned their position and fled. The heights were never occupied by the Prussians until the following day; but the town of Forbach, lying on their right, was carried by assault that evening, and great carnage took place.

And now, in case the same thought may strike you, reader, that struck me on surveying the heights after the battle of Speichern — viz., "How could such a position have been carried except by an enormously overwhelming force?"—I will tell you what a French wounded sergeant said to me the next day. He said, "True, sir, the Prussians *began* the attack with a small force, and we drove them back; but they had artillery, and could bring up, as they did towards the end of the day, reserves sufficient to surround us." He added, almost in tears, "On the contrary with us, our generals left us with no reserve echeloned in our rear except at a great distance, so that they came up only in time to assist, or rather impede, us in our flight."

This has since turned out to be a true explanation of the case. The Prussian attack was undoubtedly superb; in fact, my comrade, who had seen Alma heights, went so far as to say that they were comparatively child's play. But there is no precedent in war for supposing that French soldiers properly supported could have been turned out of such a position, which must be seen to be realised.

But return with me to the fight for a while. I will take you to a tolerably well sheltered position, though within at furthest, two hundred yards of the chassepots. It is in that little ravine at the base and to the right of the French position. It will be filled presently with Prussians, as they try to outflank the enemy. At present few have reached the spot, and those who have, have for the most part crawled there wounded by the terrible fire poured down on them as they approached.

See, there is a poor fellow in the 8th Regiment—he can never get here. A shot has struck him in the knee, and the bullets fly thickly about. He is not more than fifty yards off from us—come, we must try and drag him to our shelter. Ah! there is some one before us. It is my companion! Unseen by us, he has lain some time in this glen, the chassepot bullets singing over our heads, and now, ignorant of our pre-

sence, darts out and lifts the wounded man on to his back in a twinkling, for, though Prussian soldiers are not feather-weights, the major is strong, and has been one of England's athletes. They are comparatively safe in less than a minute; and now you have seen one of the bravest and least known deeds of the whole campaign.

You must stop here, for there is fire all around and over us, and it will not cease until night; then we will carry this poor soldier to the town, if by that time he has not paid the extreme penalty of fighting for Fatherland, when we will leave him to share his yard-thick covering of cold earth with his brother thousands. The battle-day, however, is not the thing that stirs up our sad thoughts—it is the battle-field the next day when you walk over it, about which I shall tell you presently. *That* works terribly upon the feelings, alike of the old soldier and of him who witnesses for the first time the sight of death everywhere. One feels too much excited at the fight itself, and the groans of the wounded seem drowned in the deeper roar of cannon, or rather of the battle-field. I say the roar of the battle-field, for it seemed to me, witnessing a battle for the first time, that the whole air and earth for miles round teemed with the sound of many strange ferocious beasts raging, and yet there

was only a battery and a half of artillery and no mitrailleuses engaged in this action.

Turn now and look back to the Prussian rear: there you can see the townspeople from Saarbrück in numbers come out to see the fight as if it were a review. Their town is only a quarter of a mile behind them, and they are here to see the invader invaded.

Look! there is a commotion among them; it is caused by a stray chassepot bullet leaping into their ranks; but if you watch them you may see that this constantly happens. They do not retreat, however; and the women even push forward to that little house, stirred out of German apathy as they find friends or relations laid low. This little house, or rather cow-shed, lay about a quarter of the way towards the French position, and was of course soon crammed with wounded.

There was no time to look for individual bravery; and as soon as the firing dropped, which was not until night, we regained the town. In our walk there we heard going on, far on the French left, sounds which spoke of hard fighting, and learnt the same evening that it was Forbach being carried by assault. Three days afterwards, passing through that town, the mayor informed us that out of a whole battalion of Chasseurs de Vincennes only three were left alive.

My companion was enabled to bring in his soldier to Saarbrück; but whether the poor fellow is now alive or dead we do not know. The town, since the morning, had become one large hospital, the perpetual white flag and red cross appearing from every house.

I awoke next morning with a sensation of dread upon me—dread to look out of the window into the street lest I should see painful wounds and horrid mutilations; a dread to breathe lest I should inhale that indefinable atmosphere of sores commencing to fester that already began to pervade the town. I did look out, however. There, in the back yard on some straw, where last night lay two Prussians and a Frenchman sorely wounded—now lie two corpses and a Prussian. One Prussian and the Frenchman have died in the night, and they have now, let us hope, fled upwards and together over the battle-field to the world of peace, no longer enemies.

I did not visit the battle-field until the 8th of August, or two days after the fight had taken place. Our 8th Army Corps occupied the heights, and encamped at Speichern on the 7th; and on the 9th received orders to move the following morning early. When I take up my pen to describe my walk over the scene of action, a complete sense of inability to give due force to the sights I saw comes over me; but

if you will content yourself with reading in the plainest of English what I saw and what I heard then, I will give you this, and beg you to garnish it with thought!

As we walked across the plain, over which the Prussians had rolled to the attack, I was surprised to see few or no corpses. "Don't you see," said my companion, more observant than I, "that the Prussians have buried their dead here," pointing to large mounds here and there over the ploughed land. I *did* see them: they reminded one immediately of those mounds that one sees thrown up to protect stores of root crops from winter inclemency, and for such I had at first mistaken them. The Prussians had wanted the field for an encampment, and consequently had to put their fallen brothers with unwonted haste to their last resting-place in this spot; but when we got to the foot of the heights we found first one body, then a little higher up three more, and so on until, reaching the first tier, we came to a perfect heap of Prussians. One Frenchman only have we come to yet, and he had evidently been standing at the edge of the tier above us when shot, as, higher up, is his chassepot, and in his poor stiff hands are clenched grass and mud torn up as he had endeavoured to stop his downward progress. There is the little door in his forehead that let death in and life out.

There are yet two more heights to ascend before we reach the top; on the slope approaching the next and on the flat above it, we find nothing hardly but dead Prussians. Here and there the red *kepi* of a Frenchman shows that the French have endeavoured to hold this step, but have retired forty yards higher from there, to check the tide they could not stem. Now we are at the top, out of breath, though we have not had to carry a knapsack, rifle, and sixty rounds of ammunition up with us. A little distance forward, right on the very crest, lie the French, not mixed with the Prussians, but distinct, as if the conflict had never been hand to hand. And so it is in modern war; the instances of bayonet-crossing that I have heard of in the three battles I have witnessed have been very few and far between. At this particular battle, French and Prussian approached each other to within 40 or 50 yards, and there stood firing. It was like many duels with rifles.

Walk carefully just over here where stand that knot of blouses—by the Prussian firing party, it must be an officer they are going to bury, or the latter would not be there — carefully, for you can hardly reach them without treading on a corpse. We would not tread on a grave at home in one of our snug and green churchyards; have then as much

respect for death uncovered on this brown earth, whose only other colouring is occasionally a red blotch. Ah, it is a French major that they have. But what do they do?—they pull and twist his left hand—they cannot be robbing him of a ring with the Prussian guard so close? Oh no! See, poor fellow! he has tight hold of his sergeant's right hand, who lies flat and straightened on his back beside him facing the enemy. They try, but vainly, to loosen his hold. In his left hand crumpled as near to his heart as he can—held very tightly—is a letter from his wife; and from the folds of this letter, stuck to his gory nails, peeps a lock of pale brown hair. Poor wife! God is good to you, that you cannot see your brave husband once more before they bury him. This brave officer was lying as above described in front of a mass of French bodies, at the very edge of the highest tier. Having refused to relinquish his position, he must have been shot at the same moment as, and by the side of, his sergeant; and having had time to take out the remembrance of his strongest chain to earth and grasp his faithful comrade's hand, the two must have set out for the "great unknown beyond" almost simultaneously. They were, I am glad to say, buried together.

Come from the spot! I have seen many sadder sights during the war, but none more appealing

to emotion. Continuing down the gentle slope on the Speichern side, we saw the whole 8th Army Corps in bivouac, on the ground where the French had lain some nights before, the village of Speichern lying, as it were, in the middle of the mighty host. We soon arrived at the headquarters of General von Göben, commanding the 8th Army Corps; and having paid our respects, set out in search of the 33d Regiment. My old friend Oberst-Lieutenant von Henning had been placed in command of this fine body of men during my absence, and I was anxious to congratulate him on his coming safely out of the Speichern fight. I found him at last in the middle of his regiment's bivouac, and introduced him to my friend. He then introduced us to the officer commanding the 2d battalion, Major von Gilsa, since severely wounded at Gravelotte.

On hearing that we intended to follow the Prussian army throughout the campaign, and had an *erlaubnitz* from General von Göben for that purpose, they seemed pleased but astonished, and at once undertook to dispose of our traps in their own baggage-waggons; thus removing what had in the morning appeared to us a serious difficulty, for we had brought no horses with us, and had not the slightest chance of buying any now, they being all occupied by the army.

The next day, however, these two kind officers

stretched the laws of hospitality to a most unexpected extent, and invited us to share their bivouac and food as long as the war lasted. The reader must remember that this was more for them to offer than if they had asked us to stay at their homes for six months in time of peace. Food was scanty enough, and tents were not many. We could not think at first of encumbering them with two non-combatants; but necessity, unseen by them, gave us a slight mental hint, and we accepted the offer.

I need not tell how ineffaceably the memory of the officers of that gallant 33d will remain in the warmest corner of my heart; or how I shall for ever be able to look back into the past and see, gradually further and further off in time, but still ever near to me in thought, the crackling fire, or hear the merry conversation and lovely music that used to solace us whenever night ended our day's labours. These formed gleams of happiness that will shine out through the dark memory of hours of war.

You will observe that it was not until the next day that we were offered quarters for the campaign, so to-day we had to look out for ourselves. We found in the village a musty room, with an old man and woman, both crying, in it; for the French, who, it appeared, had been lying there for weeks, had literally

taken their all, and they thought at first that we had come to take their one meal from the *pot au feu* simmering on its hook in the chimney. We reassured them with a Prussian coin, the old lady rallying at once, much more quickly than her husband, at sight of silver.

We made her open all the windows, and at first had serious thoughts of taking up our abode here for the night; but we eventually, on consideration that we should have nothing but straw to lie upon, settled to have one more good night in a bed, as, once on our way to Metz, we did not know when we might see the inside of a house again. We consequently returned to Saarbrück towards the evening. You will see further on that we had reason to rue our Sybarite proclivities.

In the afternoon we walked on, following the line of the French retreat, and found, from the quantity of shoes and gaiters marking the track, that it must have been a hasty one. There were also many poor fellows who were left behind, and consequently fell into our hands. These had scarcely anything to eat, the country being literally consumed, and my flask of cognac was soon emptied by them. At a little village to the south of Speichern I found a stable with some thirty wounded French in it. One of these was shot so terribly through

the jaw, that until a certain amount of healing had taken place he could take nothing in the shape of nourishment; and the surgeon told me that, although the wound itself was by no means mortal, he feared the poor fellow would starve.

We were not sorry, when night came, to find ourselves away from the air of the battle-field, though indeed the town in that respect was little better.

We entered a comfortable little restaurant, and found to our joy that since we had left supplies had arrived, even the luxury of beer. In the morning when we set out Saarbrück had scarcely a loaf of bread in it, the *proviante colonne* having been left behind by the quick marching of the troops, who had consequently drawn upon the commissariat of the town.

At supper we met a German correspondent, who told us the following remarkable anecdote. He had been helping, he said, to shift a wounded French captain into a more comfortable position, and had finally lifted him, from the cart that was conveying him to the hospital from Speichern, to the ground. The poor fellow could bear the jolting no longer, and so prayed to be allowed to die on the battle-field. Having made him as comfortable as he could, the German asked him how he felt. "Ah, mon ami," was the answer, "je ne sens pas beaucoup de douleur à present dans ma bles-

sure; mais c'est ici que je suis mal à mon aise," laying his hand on his heart, "car maintenant que l'enthousiasme est passé je trouve que je me suis battu seulement pour un *enfant* et pour un *vaurien*."

CHAPTER III.

THE following morning we were up at eight o'clock. We foraged and put together a handsome basket, containing among other luxuries a dozen champagne for our good friends at camp, tobacco for the soldiers, and spice for my culinary arrangements. The basket, weighing about a hundredweight, with great difficulty we induced two men, or rather a man and boy, to carry as far as the bivouac; and about ten o'clock on the 10th of August we commenced our march, which eventually brought us to Gravelotte, some seventy miles off.

Difficulties began soon to threaten us; and this day proved eventually to be one of the severest of the campaign for us, for we were in no condition for it. We retraced our steps of yesterday over the battle-field, our shortest way to where we had left the 8th Army Corps.

We had not proceeded far on our journey when a

general and staff rode past. We must have presented an eccentric sight to their eyes, for they stared at us; and eventually General Steinmetz—for it was he—sent an aide-de-camp galloping back to inquire what was our business, as strangers were strictly forbidden, and apparently there was more dread about a correspondent than a whole French regiment. We showed our pass, which was at once satisfactory, and trudged on up the heights, though slowly, as our two men were in occasional difficulties with their load.

The stench to-day was very offensive, and the appearance of the corpses fearful. One we particularly remarked. It was stiff, bent into a curve, resting on the back of its head and on its heels. It formed an arch across a furrow. Its face was quite black, and the whole was swollen to the size of a giant.

We at last topped the hill, and looked down upon the valley of Speichern. Imagine our dismay at finding not a trace of our camp of yesterday. No, you cannot imagine this, because it would seem easy enough to you to have asked the first soldier you met, where had the 8th Army Corps gone to? We were then little known among the soldiers; and such a question, just on the frontier, might have been sufficient to have got us lynched as spies, and at any rate we should almost certainly have been marched back to the Stat Com-

mandant at Saarbrück to have our papers examined, which in itself would have been a bore. So we consequently let a baggage-train pass, very reluctantly, without seeking information. The aspect of affairs was now gloomy in the extreme. The rain began to fall heavily; our two porters argued that they had agreed to carry our basket to Speichern and no farther, and, placing it on the ground, demanded payment. We eventually settled to pay the hire and shoulder the basket between us; and had just accomplished this when we saw come up on to the horizon from the Saarbrück side a large body of horsemen. We could see by the shining helmets of some and the lancer shako of others that it was a magnate and his staff. Putting down the basket, we took out our glasses, and with their assistance distinctly recognised the fine old King of Prussia riding in front, and behind him, a little in advance of the staff, came Count Bismark and Commander-in-Chief von Moltke. They had come out to view the combined effects of human strategy and passion. I trust they were content. They disappeared again over the hill, and there was now not a soul in sight except a few ill-looking blouses. It was not a nice situation. We were in an enemy's country. We both had good revolvers, but had left them with our baggage, intending to be

always with the regiment. I picked up a dead man's sword; and this I determined to stick to until we came up with the army.

We trudged on towards Forbach, and presently a cart came on behind us. It was a magadenda cart belonging to a company of the 29th Regiment. Now the 29th was in our division, and we here saw a chance of getting our baggage carried, as we knew the 33d and this regiment lay close together. After some remonstrance from the driver and firm persuasion from us, he took the basket into his cart, and also my companion, who had a sore foot; but rather damped our feelings of congratulation by telling us that he did not expect to be up with his company for two days. And here I will say one word about the magadenda.

They are a difficult class to describe. To begin with, they are the only disreputable people in the Prussian army—not a little to be able to say, from personal experience, for a body of 200,000 or 300,000 men. They answer to our canteen; but there appears to be no supervision as to the quality of liquor or other merchandise which they purchase and resell to the soldiers at an enormous profit. Each company has its magadenda cart. They are, more especially the women, barefaced looters of the dead; and I one day saw an ugly red-haired virago with two Prussian and

a French medal on her breast. They never seem drunk or boisterous, but they may be found always quietly robbing, directly the dead, or indirectly the living. All this we did not know at the time, and even had we, should not have been alarmed, as this class of society does not at any time commit depredations entailing assault; besides which my Prussian sword would have been quite enough for a rencontre with this particular magadenda. What we did fear, and what he evidently feared too, was that, being isolated from the baggage-train, we might fall into an ambuscade of hostile peasantry in the forest of Forbach, through which we had to pass.

We met with no adventure, however; and towards the end of an hour, on coming to the verge of the wood and looking down into the valley, we saw the snake-like train of baggage-waggons, extending both ends out of sight. When we got up, or rather down, to this, we found it utterly impossible to get into the line; and so, very unwillingly, we again shouldered our basket and trudged on to Forbach, about a mile ahead. My companion here left me to inquire for porters, and I stepped into a cottage with the basket out of the wet, for all the time it was pouring with rain. My dress, which through the campaign has always, for some unknown reason, been a source of amusement to the

Prussian soldier, here attracted the attention of some hussars. These hussars are gifted with a large share of impudence, and they refused to believe my statement that I was an Englishman and attached to their corps. The best they would make of me was a cigar and wine merchant, having an eye to my basket; and they first took me for a Polish spy. They began to try and bully me into selling my goods; and I have no doubt that in less than a minute I should have found myself no longer an ally of the Prussians, when to my delight up came my companion with a general of division. It was amusing to see the dismay and surprise of the hussars when the general came up and addressed me courteously, wet through and bedraggled as I was. They could not leave their post, and evidently expected to become at once the topic of our conversation.

We opened a bottle of our champagne, and by consuming the contents, simultaneously lightened our hearts and our loads. At the former operation the general materially assisted. Softened by the champagne, he informed us that our corps was this night to bivouac at a village called Lauterbach, some twenty-five kilometres or six hours' march ahead.

Hiring a peasant as guide, we at once set out, and nothing further of interest occurred until we

reached our destination about nine o'clock. During this night the scene was very sad. So terrible a time, in fact, was it for the soldiers, that the term, "a second Lauterbach," is a common simile to this day with the Prussian troops for a bad bivouac. The causes were these: It was only the second long march that the regiments had made, and consequently the soldiers were not in condition. The rain had been pouring down all day; the night was bitterly cold; and lastly, and worst of all, the *proviante colonne* had no chance of being up that night. Hence it was that, having sloshed through the mud to the camps of different regiments to find the 33d, and having abandoned the attempt as hopeless, the rain having extinguished almost all the bivouac fires, we found ourselves, with our basket of delicacies intended for Colonel von Henning, introduced into a room, about 20 feet by 12, crammed with at least sixty starving soldiers. Our entrance caused faint signs of pleasure, for they thought that we could sell our food; but on being told by our conductor that we were Englishmen, and had stores for an officer, though you could see the shade return as it chased away the momentary smile from their faces, none of those present in the room again asked us to sell. Any fresh comer, however, asked at once the old question of us, "Haben sie

schnappes oder brot zu verkaufen?" — "Have you spirits or bread to sell?"

I gave the little of the latter I had to them, as well as a fine fillet of beef, which they had to eat raw, as there was no fire to cook it; but it did not go far amongst them, and it was truly piteous to see the faces of those who got none. All this time not one sound of fighting or ill temper did I hear.

They had scarcely finished their scanty supper when we heard the first of General Steinmetz's many harsh orders. A *polizei* or field gendarme, in his greatcoat and with drawn sword, suddenly appeared at the door, and shouted, with rough voice, the single word "heraus," implying "turn out." Yes, General Steinmetz had ordered that the soldiers should join the bivouac, to make their beds, not on the ground, but in the mud —not a murmur, not a word. One poor fellow looked piteously at me for intervention. He tried to rise from his bench, but his knees would not bend straight. The *polizei* motioned him sternly to be quick. A thought struck me. I walked gravely up to the soldier, seized his pulse, felt it for a minute—not much to feel, poor fellow!—placed my hand on his heart, shook my head, and then remarked to the *polizei*, in the best German I could muster, that it would kill the man to force him into the wet. The gendarme

demurred at first, but eventually, taking me for a doctor, left, and great was the poor fellow's gratitude to me for enabling him to sleep on a hard table instead of the cold damp ground.

It was now time to look out for a bed for ourselves. The drippings from the men's coats had rendered the floor of the room a perfect swamp, except at one corner, and in this corner, having first placed some straw, we lay down to sleep.

Thus ended our first day's campaign on the march. It was now about eleven o'clock, and we had been on our legs since five A. M. We shall see presently what event ushered in our second day. But now let us sleep and forget for a time the sad sights of that day. This, indeed, was one of the saddest days I ever spent. In the morning, the battle-field, and death everywhere; in the evening, a camp with no fear at the time of mortal foes, but death still with it in the guise of hunger and cold.

CHAPTER IV.

A YELLOW dawn had scarcely lit the room when I was aware of a rough blow on my shoulder. Thinking that my companion had turned or struck out in his sleep, I refused to be awakened by it; and not until I found myself fairly dragged from the straw did I become aware of the fact that a poor fellow, swollen and livid with cold and want, had been found dying in a ditch, whence he had been unable to move, and that my couch of straw was requested for him. They laid him down. He could not even groan. The friendly morning's light had discovered too late his pitiful condition, and it was only an expression of ease that at last overspread his features which told us death had cured his pain. Many more came to their end on and from that night.

At seven o'clock we set out in search of our 33d again. The rain had ceased, and the sun breaking forth promised a contrast to yesterday. We at last found our

bivouac, and a hearty welcome we received. It was on this occasion that we were invited to share their tents for the future. They were situated in a beautiful wood of beech trees. The cheery voices of 3000 men, and the ringing of their axes, as they felled tree after tree for their fires and huts, echoing on all sides, proved a striking change indeed from the scene of inanition we had just left below us in the village.

And here, I think, it will be a fit place to give a slight description of a Prussian bivouac. There were two tents attached to the first and third battalion, and to the second there were three, as, besides the usual major's and captain's tent, the oberst-lieutenant had his. Thus we had seven tents among 3150 men. These were, of course, insufficient to house the officers. Amongst the many proofs the Prussian soldier has given of what a practically good one he is, it is difficult to select a more striking instance than the cleverness with which he improvises a house wherever branches can be got. I said above that this was a beech wood. Now any one knows that it is a characteristic of these trees, where they grow thickly, to destroy the underwood. These proved no exception to the rule; and when we first saw the wood at eight o'clock in the morning, in looking into it one's eye rested on nothing but the peculiar aspect of the bare and smooth

trunks. In an hour's time this scene was completely changed; every trunk seemed to have at its base a splendid growth of undercover, and it was not until you came close up to and walked among this undercover that you found it to be an indisputable fact that the Prussian soldier was practically acquainted with the classical proverb, "Necessity is the mother of invention." Here were the snuggest houses conceivable—waterproof to a reasonable extent, and arranged in nice little streets. The scene was a busy one. The men had, most of them, got over their night's wetting, and were furbishing at their *liebe zündnadelgewehr*, second only to themselves in its power of wear-and-tear. Whenever they could get branches, the troops always made these little villages in an incredibly short space of time, and we often came upon snug little dwellings in our march made by the divisions that had preceded us.

Nothing occurred throughout the day—the 11th of August—but I cannot pass this point in my narrative without attempting to describe the difference between the scene on which the sun went down that evening, and the one on which it shed its murky light the day preceding. We saw sorrow, pain, despair, and all the miseries that attend cold and hunger last night. To-night we see how quickly mirth and

sorrow tread upon each other's heels in war. It is seven o'clock P.M. The wood rings with the laughter of the men as they merrily cut up their rations (for the *proviante colonne* has come up). The camp-fires begin to crackle. But we will now go outside the wood. The fires in our bivouac will be a finer sight when we return in the dark. Do you see that splendid tree some fifty yards from the edge of the wood? It is to him we must go. From there you can see in an amphitheatre the other side of the valley—not the 8th Army Corps only, but five corps in bivouac, numbering about 175,000 men. Yes; there are the troops that have since conquered or perished at the battles of Gorze and Gravelotte, and investment of Metz. The glorious sun gradually fades, and simultaneously spurt out on the dark hill-side camp-fires as of little remnants left behind by him. There is no *noise* from this vast host, strange to say, but the air teems with *sound*, and as the host swarms about the valley and on the hills opposite, it suggests the discovery of some giant and antediluvian species of insect. A band, too, began to play one of Strauss's many cheery compositions; and when it had ceased, then in another direction I heard Mendelssohn's "Abschied vom Wald" rolled forth from many rich voices. This is one of his most beau-

tiful four-part open-air songs, and I allude to it so that those who can, may imagine the effect produced on this occasion. But hark! swelling over the still valley comes an air that we hear with warming hearts —it is our own "God save the Queen." This air is also used for the Prussian national anthem. When I used to hear it, it sounded like a friend's voice among a crowd of strangers; and instinctively, though of course it did not refer to our Queen, I always removed my hat. Let us return now to our camp. As I told you, the fires now are worth looking at —the wood, in fact, seems to have the base of each tree on fire. Those soldiers now have not a thought, not a care. God help the poor fellows in the hardships that are closing on them.

It is now nine o'clock P.M., and I shall avail myself of Major von Gilsa's kind offer of sleeping in his tent. But first of all, Lieut. Gatung has an excellent supper of bacon and *bouillon*. After this nutritious meal, having wrapped myself in my excellent old Irish frieze, I lay down in a soldier's abode for the first time in my life, lulled by delicious music.

CHAPTER V.

It was scarcely dawn when the peculiar Prussian *reveillé* brought us to our feet, and emerging from the tent we found the troops nearly under arms, though at present we did not know where we had to march to. An order to march at seven o'clock was countermanded. Finally we started at nine o'clock, and a truly fine sight it was to see the troops as in column they wound among the trees to the exit of the wood. Nothing of interest happened during this march, which was not a very long one, and towards six o'clock we arrived at Oberwisler, about fifteen English miles from Lauterbach in a south-westerly direction. It may seem that we took a long time over this journey; but remember that it was not a regiment on the march, or even an army corps of 35,000 men, but three times that number, some of our *corps d'armée* having left us the day before. The blocks, therefore, were constant, and our generals wisely determined to march soldiers new to their work

as slowly as possible. In spite of this precaution, many men fell out on these first days, and many a poor fellow did my companion and myself nearly carry on to his regiment. The boot known to Englishmen as the "half Wellington" is the species in vogue with the Prussian, or rather German, army. Now, it would be impossible to invent one worse calculated for walking distances in.

The very minute I had discovered the exact spot that our bivouac was to occupy, I hastened to the little village that gave its name to the camp to forage. I saw a garden on my way. In the garden I saw, to my amazement, French beans, artichokes, onions, and apparently every sort of good vegetable. I quickly made an opening through a not very thick hedge—a thing they don't understand abroad, by the by—and commenced my first, and nearly my last, act of pillage. My dress, which I have mentioned before as being a source of amusement to the troops, I shall now describe, to show that I had my *quid pro quo* in it for being laughed at. It was simply an ordinary Norfolk shirt and knickerbocker suit, composed of a soft brown Scotch tweed. The edifice was crowned with an Indian sun-cap. Every one knows that a Norfolk shirt, properly made, hangs about one in easy folds until confined at the waist by a belt, when the ingenious person — such

as in this instance I must call myself—can turn the whole garment into one large pocket. I had not been five minutes in this garden before I was a perfect walking greengrocer, having stored the "easy folds" with every species of vegetable; my astonishment at meeting no soldier catering for dinner increasing at every bean I picked or every onion I tore up.

Suddenly the explanation of the mystery came. A hand on my shoulder, and a rough voice behind me, just as I was beginning to fill my outside pockets, made me turn sharply. There stood the bearded and much dreaded *polizei*, with drawn sword. The truth flashed across me with horrid clearness — a guard had been placed over this little Eden, and I had been caught in the very fact of taking what was not mine, and should consequently have to go to prison; for such is the law laid down in the little song, though not in such elegant language, if I remember right. At first I thought there must be some mistake, for who ever heard of not being allowed to take a few vegetables for a mess belonging to the officers of a conquering army? So I began to explain; but as this only served to bring the point of my enemy's sword close to my person, as he pointed with his other hand to the guard some fifty yards off, I obeyed his rough summons of *vorwärts!* (forward) and soon

found myself before his superior officer. I indulged the hope that this gentleman would not attribute the bulkiness of my person to anything else than the peculiar cut of my clothes; and so, on being asked "Was haben sie genommen?" I, with seeming candour, drew forth a single onion, the only thing I had placed in my ordinary pockets, and stated my perfect willingness to pay for it, if I could only find the owner. I meant this as a gentle hint, but the dense —no, I mean the incorruptible—Teuton, did not see it.

I think, however, he was struck by the nobleness of my offer; for, after deliberating a few minutes, he bade me rejoin my regiment, and not again commit what he termed the "greatest offence a friend of the Prussians could be guilty of." So I returned to bivouac, literally surrounded with vegetables. Here I told the dear old Oberst and his officers the whole story as a good joke; but they were very grave over it; and it was only on my undertaking not to repeat the offence that I induced them to partake of my stolen fruit, which, true to the old proverb, proved very sweet. I mention this comparatively trifling occurrence perhaps at too great length; but I do it as one of the many instances of the remarkable efforts the authorities of the Prussian army have made to prevent plunder by their soldiers. As soon

as we came to halt for a bivouac near any villages, before the men were allowed to go off on fatigue-parties for water, &c., strong guards were told off invariably, to protect the villagers from the hungry troops.

Our next day's march brought us to Bionville. The night passed off quietly, and, receiving no orders the next day, we made ourselves ready for a rest. In the afternoon I strolled down to a valley about a mile and a half off, hoping to get a bath in the river. This I did, and then succeeded in catching some of those delicious little animals, crawfish. I was thinking of returning, when it struck me I heard a sound like thunder in the distance. Putting my ear to the ground, I distinctly heard what I knew to be heavy cannonading. This was the second time only I had heard the voice of battle, and my heart thumped against my ribs with excitement. Some soldiers had joined me from the 60th Regiment to fetch water; they threw down their cans, and we all ran back to camp as fast as we could, knowing that if our division was ordered forward it would be no easy matter to join them. We found that our entire brigade was under arms, ready like dogs in the leash, and anxious for orders to spring forward.

From this height we could see, about twelve miles off, the whole battle. It commenced at three o'clock.

I climbed up into a tree, and, with my excellent glass, watched the course of events. It must be borne in mind that we were due east of Metz now about fifteen or seventeen miles, and that the battle was exactly between us and Metz. The French had intrenched themselves in a very strong position, having, as we afterwards learned, employed over 1000 workmen to increase its capabilities of defence. The Prussian 1st Army Corps attacked them vigorously on their left, but were repulsed with such terrible loss that towards the evening we could see what proved to be the 7th Army Corps coming up to support them on the left. Eventually the French retired upon Metz, but the Prussian loss was very great.

Here is the outline of the landscape for you, reader. If you have an artist's mind, from it you can draw such a picture as few have seen; if not, you must content yourself with knowing that on the 14th of August 1870 the battle of Lauvallier was fought. What I saw was this: A glorious sunset, the sun having just hidden half of himself in the horizon due west of the fight; bomb after bomb bursting in the air, and seeming many of them to explode right on him; and between me and all this a beautiful country, such as you might see in the weald of Kent, or any other of our lovely shires. Sometimes the breeze brought

with it the sound of the strife very plainly, even the rattle of musketry; at others you could hear no noise; and the shells, as they broke in the air with a soft, harmless look, made me think of giants with giant pipes amusing themselves bubble-blowing.

Though expecting to be sent forward every moment, we got no orders to move until next morning at eight o'clock, having been under arms all night. We were cheered before marching by the joyful news that, during the engagement we had witnessed the preceding evening, Prince Frederick Charles had crossed the Moselle at Pont-au-Mousson with the larger part of his army, having executed a flank movement to the south of Metz, without firing a shot, during the diversion caused by the fight due east of it on yesterday the 14th.

We started this morning for the first time without the slightest knowledge as to where we were going. We all hoped to be before Metz by evening, as it lay apparently straight in front of us, about fifteen English miles off; and as we knew that town was our destination, we thought that evening would bring us to the end of what had been, up to the present time, a period of inactivity as regards fighting. In our anxiety to see the enemy, however, we forgot that a town had two sides to it, and that the west side

of a large town like Metz would be a long way removed from the east, in case we should be sent round; so we trudged on, I think, with unusually light hearts, for about two hours, when our mid-day halt was called.

Here it soon became apparent, from the departure of different orderlies, that our colonel had as yet received no definite orders as to the direction we were to take. Thus far we had marched this morning straight forward in the direction of last night's battle; and at this point we came to sad sights of mutilated soldiers and officers, with heads bound up, going to the rear.

Presently we heard the now familiar sound of a Prussian band advancing, playing one of Strauss's most beautiful waltzes. It came in sight; you could see it was at the head of a single battalion of Jägers. The men were all grave—so grave, with expressions of countenances terribly at variance with their lively step and beautiful music. I addressed myself, somewhat thoughtlessly, to one of their officers, questioning him about yesterday's fight. He answered me civilly, but gravely, finishing with the following words: "We were in action yesterday; this battalion lost 400 men, and I am marching the remnant back to be recruited." Four hundred out of 1050.—The 43d Regiment then wound past us; they had lost a third of their whole strength—3050. They also marched to the sound of strains that

would have waked their dead comrades were such a gift permitted to mortal music. Invariably, before and after action, you might hear Mendelssohn, Beethoven, or some selection from other popular composers, inspiring the troops to cheerfulness. A reaction had set in among us from the feeling of lightness that had prevailed in the morning. We should not have been worthy of the name of men had we been able to see unmoved those two sad columns wind by; so we were not sorry when two hussars galloped up with orders, and we resumed our march.

It soon became evident that this side of Metz was not our destination, as we now struck due south for a long time. It also became known that we were to make a forced march, the colonel coming up and offering both my companion and myself horses. My companion, having a bad foot, accepted; I, however, preferred to tramp. At this time we were very short of provisions, and I felt quite famished as I sat down in a ditch when our next halt was called. A kind major of the 60th Regiment, marching just in front of us, made me take a piece of his sausage and *schwartzbrot*. He has since, I am thankful to say, passed unscathed through the fiery ordeal of Gravelotte, though he has seen 35 of his officers and 950 men of his regiment laid low in that battle.

We now turned to the south-west, and towards eight o'clock arrived at a small village called Basse Beux. I left the officers to attend to their different duties about the regiment, and having first discovered where the colonel's quarters were fixed for the night, I dived into the house, and commenced inspecting the commissariat department. I told the good lady of the house that we were prepared to pay for everything, but that the best we must have. She soon found some very fair wine, and I some chickens, which I placed in the *pot au feu*, and thus thought my day's troubles were over. The pot had scarcely commenced to simmer when I heard crackling outside, and then the words "Fire! fire!" The next house was burning. This may appear a matter of small importance, but it was not so; we had none of us had anything to eat all day, and now I thought I should have to abandon my food. I did not leave my post, however; and in spite of the repeated warnings of the soldiery to come out, at the end of an hour had the satisfaction of finding my chickens boiled, and myself not roasted. The fire, too, had abated, owing in great measure to my companion's instructions to the soldiers, whom he made pull down the adjoining house. Five pigs were burned, and that was all the life lost.

I repaired with my repast to the up-stairs room, which

was to have formed our bed and dining room, but found that my comrades had all gone. After some little difficulty I got them together—Major von Gilsa, Lieutenant Gatung, and my companion—the colonel only being missing. He had taken up his quarters at a château on the fire breaking out, and next morning we found that we alone had eaten anything that night. We did not get to bed on some straw till three o'clock, and at six we were again on the march.

CHAPTER VI.

I AM now coming to a part of my narrative full of sad events, following fast upon one another. In fact, my memory from this period to the time I left the Prussian army seems to point only to suffering and sorrow. We hastened forward, leaving our division behind, and arrived at two o'clock in the afternoon of the 16th of August at Gorze, in time to witness what must be considered the most important portion of the most important struggle of the campaign. Many good reports have appeared of this battle; but, besides my companion and self, there was only one Englishman present at it, a Captain Seton of the 102d Fusilier regiment. He was mounted, and throughout the fight the whole day, losing his kit and a considerable sum of money.

I shall now give an account of the part of the battle that came under our immediate observation. It was the immediate centre of the fight on the wide plateau outside the wood just above Gorze, and before you

come to the village of Rezonville. At two o'clock, when we arrived, the battle had already raged for five hours. The French divisions were those of Generals l'Admirault, Deccaen, Canrobert, and Froissard, the whole under the command of Marshal Bazaine. They had evidently fallen back upon and retreated through Metz, after the battle of the 14th, and were now retiring towards Verdun, probably with the intention of co-operating with M'Mahon, who was also converging in that direction, hotly pressed by the Crown Prince.

The van of this army, commanded by Marshal Bazaine in person, had reached Mars la Tour, a hamlet to the north-west of the plateau described above, when they were discovered and attacked at nine o'clock in the morning by the cavalry only of the 3d Army Corps. This splendid body of horsemen kept in check the whole French army for five hours, suffering fearful loss; but at one time, charging Bazaine and his personal staff, they nearly captured the former, placing twenty of the latter *hors de combat.* This daring feat was performed by a battalion of the notorious Uhlans. About half-past two o'clock General Alvensleben brought up the infantry of the 3d Army Corps, including the 5th Brandenburg division, of Saarbrück and Speichern heights

celebrity; and coming up from the south-east through the defiles of Gorze, with his advance, composed of the 11th Regiment, concealed by the Bois des Ognons, he was thus enabled to attack the enemy on their left flank. The divisions under Generals Froissard and l'Admirault, which formed about the centre of the Frency army, at once changed front, resting their base upon Rezonville, and immediately advanced to take possession of the wood; but that was now held by the Prussians. The mistake could not be repaired, so the artillery of the Imperial Guard opened a tremendous fire of shrapnell and shell upon the wood. The 11th Prussian regiment were the first to emerge from the Bois des Ognons as they advanced to the attack; but being some distance in the van they were compelled to return to the wood, until the 72d and 40th Regiments joined them. All these regiments suffered terribly from the French shells, which now literally lit up the wood. These three regiments, with the 35th, now deployed into the open, and commenced a steady advance in skirmishing order under the most fearful fire from the chassepots of the Grenadier, Voltigeur, and Chasseur-à-pied Regiments of the Imperial Guard, and from the mitrailleuses of the artillery. The former, when they found that it was too late to get possession of the wood, having advanced towards it half way from

Rezonville, lay down and poured a deadly fire over their knapsacks upon the advancing foe, thus enabling the artillery to fire over them. But in the face of all this we did not notice a momentary check in the Prussian advance, and these four regiments gained ground foot by foot, now somewhat covered by artillery that had been brought up on their left. At the critical time in the fight, towards six o'clock in the evening, the Prussian generals again gave evidence of their wise disposition of reserves. Prince Frederick Charles and General Steinmetz, with parts of the 8th and 9th Army Corps, and the 10th German Corps and cavalry, came up. Our attack was now pushed on all sides, and towards eight o'clock we could notice plainly a retrograde movement on the part of the French—a very slight one; but from this moment they retreated steadily, fighting every inch of the way, and in perfect order, slowly yielding foot by foot, night gradually covering them with her dark wing. Next morning it was found that they had retired on the strong position of St Hubert, and that we had them now hemmed in in a narrow space around Metz.

Nothing could have been more complete than the victory for the Prussians in this battle; and when I point out that it had for its immediate result the investment of about 100,000 trained soldiers, and

that thus one of the finest French armies and ablest generals were precluded from further operations in the field throughout the campaign, I think it will be conceded that I was right in calling the battle of Gorze the most important struggle of this war. For had Bazaine succeeded in joining M'Mahon, it is hardly to be believed that he would have concurred in the latter's terrible mistake, which eventually ended in the Sedan catastrophe, without a parallel in human history.

We could not find our bivouac that fearful night. It was useless to hope for the shelter of a house, and so we had to content ourselves with nothing to eat and straw to lie upon. This night we were not lulled by the strains of Prussian music; but on all sides through the black darkness came the sounds of groans from the dying, for we lay down on the top of the hill between the wood and Gorze, not one mile from the battle-field, or, as the Prussians appropriately call it, the *Schlachtfeld*.

It was puzzling at first to account for the number of corpses and dying men that lay on this, the Gorze side, of the wood; but next day it became apparent that they were those poor fellows who, for the most part wounded by shells among the trees, had crawled as far as they could in the direction of help—

help that never came to many of them in this world. Death visited many in our immediate vicinity in the night, however; and many whom that evening we saw suffering, and whose parched lips we had moistened with water, next morning we noticed were stiff, and no longer wanting care other than that of a well-handled mattock. One poor fellow in particular, whose groaning kept us awake, we gave our straw to. He did not cease to groan, however, for a long time, and I think it must have been death that stopped him then, for in the morning we found him lying on his back, his legs crossed, and his hands in the attitude of prayer, quite dead—much in the same position that we see the stone effigies of our ancestors placed in.

We thought, on awaking next morning, that it was high time that we ate something; and we determined, before going through the wood to the battle-field, to return down the hill to the town of Gorze. This was only about a quarter of an hour's walk. The scene along the road was beyond all description; every two or three yards you came to either a Prussian who had died of his wounds in the night, or some poor wretch waiting for the stretcher and surgeon's knife. Blood was literally running down the hill to the town. Now and then you would pass six or seven wounded lying side by side, attended by doctors and nuns—im-

provised out-door hospitals, for every house in Gorze was full. There were at that moment, in and around the town, 18,000 French and Prussian wounded; and as its population was only 1500 or 2000 at the most, it may be imagined what sort of accommodation these unfortunates had. At the Château St Catherine, one mile the other side of Gorze, belonging to an old Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur, were at this time 1500 French and Prussian soldiers and officers in different states of mutilation.

We could get nothing to eat in the town. A wretched French corporal, who was shot through the mouth and jaw, attracted our attention by the most piteous moans. He could not eat anything, but he pointed to a spout from which ran water. He could not reach it himself, as I now saw his right ankle was shattered. I raised him and washed his poor disfigured face, and he then gave me to understand he wished for something out of his knapsack. I passed the contents before his eyes. He greedily laid his hand on a letter, at the same time displacing a bit of hard biscuit, which, knowing he could not possibly eat, I took up. Seeing me do this, he motioned that there was more, and so that morning we thankfully breakfasted off this wretched man's biscuit. We had tasted nothing for twenty-four hours.

We now saw trotting up the High Street what we knew, from the red bags peering out from the tops of their busbies, was a squadron of the King's Hussars, attached to our division for the purpose of covering our advance. The officer informed us that the 8th Army Corps were now crossing the Moselle at Arie, a little village about five miles from Gorze; so we determined to walk back and march with them into the town. We found the corps crossing, at the point above stated, on two pontoon bridges. They were just having the mid-day halt, and we had afterwards good reason to be glad that we had returned to see them; with many it was our last meeting on earth. Hitherto we had been, as it were, in the reserve of the first army; now we were to go to the front and feel the scourges of the god of war, other than cold, hunger, and wet. I walked about from one regiment to another, the 60th, 69th, and our own 33d. The officers were all kind and courteous, and most of them could speak English tolerably well.

If it had been given to them to look into the book of futurity, and see the very black page that they were coming to, would those four young fellows be quietly playing their rubber?—three of them are since dead by Gravelotte. See, too, that handsome major, as he goes down the bank of the Moselle

with a piece of soap, as he laughingly expresses it, to make his toilet. At Gravelotte, the day after, he had two horses shot under him, and finally received a bullet through his heart.

But I am anticipating. In about an hour and a half we were again on the march along the left bank of the Moselle. A mile from the point where we crossed, we turned off to the left, two miles short of Noveaut, and another hour and a half brought us to the heights above Gorze on the south-east side. Here we again took leave of our brigade, as we were anxious to push on to the battle-field of yesterday, and be of what assistance we could to the scores of sufferers that we knew as yet could have had no human being near them, save their own dying comrades or a marauding magadenda. About 100 officers, with whom we were on speaking terms, we never saw again, except some of them as they lay stark—and, I am glad to say, for the most part with a painless expression of death on their countenances—waiting till they were placed in their last abode.

We descended into the town, for we had to go through it to reach the battle-field, which lay to the north by a little west, we being east by a little south. We walked up the High Street, now blocked up by the passing column. It was truly a village of lamenta-

tions. The white flag and red cross hung out of every house. The Hotel de Ville was one large hospital.

Presently I saw, for the first time since I had been with the Prussian army, a soldier partially intoxicated. He was carrying two bottles under each arm; and, occasionally putting them down, took a drink from a fifth, which he carried in his hand. Curious to know where he had got such a supply of liquor, I addressed him. He at once offered us the bottle, and pointed in a vague manner to the place from whence he had obtained it. We found it was that terrible spirit, "eau-de-vie de Raisin," and declined his offer; but thinking that there might be better fish in the sea than he had been able to catch, we followed the direction indicated, and presently came upon a curious sight.

Round the corner of a street, issuing from an unpretending house, over which, however, was painted in large characters the title "Marchand des Vins par M. Jaquin," we saw a tide of Prussian soldiers, each having as many bottles as he could carry. Seeing how matters stood, we were both of us at once struck with the idea of doing something for the honour of the Prussian name. We made for the house, and, forcing our way through the outpouring soldiers, entered the shop, or rather store. My companion, who speaks

admirable German, at once addressed them, remonstrating with them for lowering the Prussian repute for honest and orderly conduct. There were at this time some forty soldiers of all sorts in the shop; and can it be believed that these fine fellows, who had been in bivouac for the last twenty nights—who had been wet through night after night, and at the best had had nothing but bad red wine to drink, left the shop with scarcely one dissentient voice? From the woman of the house I got a list of the articles consumed, and with it repaired to the commandant of the town. He at once placed at our disposal a guard of *polizei*, whom we conducted to the shop, in case other troops might come there that night, and assured us that the goods taken should be paid for.

Few will understand the pleasure it gives me to recount this anecdote, showing, as it does, the astonishing docility of the Prussian soldier, and the prompt action of the Prussian officer at the first warning of plunder by his men. It gives me genuine delight to put the testimony of my not inconsiderable experience against the ill-weighed assertions of certain prejudiced men. During a period of two months that I remained with the Prussian 1st Army, marching with them through village after village, I never saw, and scarcely ever heard of, an act of

plunder; and it is my firm belief that in many instances—I am certain in the case of the dear, warm-hearted old Colonel of the 33d Regiment—the commanders of regiments were far too lenient with the French peasantry.

We made M. Jaquin's house our headquarters for a week after the above event; and though the guard was withdrawn, and we saw his stores emptied, not another bottle left the house except what was paid for with ready money.

I cannot leave this point of my journal without giving a description of poor Jaquin. He was, to use an expressive term, what the country people call "half saved." But for all that he was clever in his way, his chief madness consisting in his goodnature to his fellow-creatures, a quality that, his mother assured me, had twice lost him his all. Thus, when he had sold all his spirits and wines, I found him one morning looking rather blue. I had heard in the early morning what I took to be a family altercation, so I asked poor Jaquin what was the matter. "Oh, only my mamma is so selfish; she blames me because I have sold all my wine at half the price that the other merchants have, and that to Prussians. But, as I told her, they are my brother men, and they suffer much." He was a

great politician also, knowing the politics of Alsace and Lorraine of all ages. His great idea was to form Alsace, Lorraine, Luxembourg, and Belgium into one large neutral state, thus putting a stop to what he termed the *bêtise* of France and Germany.

When we first went into his house, in our anxiety to clear the soldiers out of the shop, we did not notice a little door, forming, as it were, a part of the wall to one side of the room. Now, however, that quiet was restored, our attention was attracted to it by its being partially opened. An old woman's head timidly looked out, and seeing no one but us in the shop, the body quickly followed. She implored us to enter, first ascertaining that we could understand French. We complied with her request. What a sight presented itself to our gaze! Lying on his back in the corner of the room, which proved to be in size not more than 10 feet by 6, on a carelessly arranged truss of straw, lay a beautiful young Prussian officer—flaxen hair, silky moustache, and poor pleading blue eyes. His shirt thrown open, in the fruitless endeavour to let out the fever-heat, discovered a fair neck and shoulders that might have served as a model for Adonis. There in the middle of his white chest was a cruel-looking little red hole, ill concealed by a bunch of charpie hastily placed there

yesterday to stop the outward flow of life-blood. Since then no doctor had been able to attend him, and in this state had he been for twenty-four hours. Poor fellow! he was not patient: instinctively I felt that he was one of those loved and spoilt children who in our country have always the bed of down to lie upon; but in Germany these may have their bed of down until war comes, for the mother's heart will be of the same nature in all climes; but then he must away and fight for his country, despite an old father's sigh, who thinks not that he has to go himself, or the mother's tear. He proved to be the adjutant of one battalion of the fighting 40th Regiment. He requested us, in a low voice, to go to the major of his regiment and beg him to send a doctor. I washed his wound and made him as comfortable as I could, and then we set out on our mission.

We found as we wended our way up the hill that the French corporal had been removed. We looked into a litter yard close by. They had placed him there, but only to die; here lay his corpse. Before death had released him, he had found time to place his precious letter under his tunic, and we could see it now peering between the buttons, near his still heart.

We reached the top of the hill where we had lain

down last night, and seeing that there were several bivouacs on the side of the wood, we inquired if the 40th were amongst them: their bivouac was pointed out, and certainly it was a wretched sight. There lay the remnants of this splendid regiment. They left Treves at the commencement of the war, three battalions, each 1050 strong. The three battalions now scarcely numbered 900 men, having been further reduced at Gravelotte. We made our way to the major of the 2d battalion, and found him standing before his tent with a most sad cast of countenance; around him were lying some six younger officers, all fast asleep, and with the stains of yesterday's battle-field still on them. Amongst these I was startled to perceive the showy forage-cap and neat patrol jacket of one of our own Fusilier regiments. We made known to the major the distressing state in which we had found his adjutant. He thanked us very much, and we then entered that fearful Bois des Ognons.

CHAPTER VII.

LET those who cannot see it picture to themselves one of the many fine woods that abound in our own little isle—such a one as you may look upon in Kent; then having walked a mile on a road passing under beautiful beech and ash trees, joining as it seems in many common sighs for the sad scenes they witnessed yesterday, and bowing their graceful heads as if in sorrow for those they cover now; imagine that you emerge on a wide-stretching undulating brown plain, such as is to be seen in Wiltshire, with only a nominal hedge here and there—the tableau is before you.

We passed into the wood along the road, and soon it presented the appearance that a ride does after a battue in England, and before the keeper has been down it to collect the game—only for dead pheasants or rabbits lay dead Prussians; and then that dread odour of which the air seemed full, and which has been termed the scent of the battle-field. If your eye did not rest on a body, it would involuntarily fix itself on a little mound

of earth thrown up in the ditch with a cross upon it; and propped up on many of these I saw wounded soldiers, glad even of such support. We did not stop here, for, being nearest the town, these poor fellows were nearer assistance.

So we continued, and presently emerged from the wood on to the plain. Here was the place which I have before described as the centre of the battle; and such a sight presented itself to our gaze when we looked over the brown stretch of land before us, as can never be effaced from memory. In our immediate neighbourhood lay nothing but corpses of soldiers in the 11th, 35th, and 72d Regiments of the Prussian line, as it was here they first deployed from the wood. A good many of these we noticed to be in life-like attitudes, and one or two who had been able to reach scanty cover in the shape of bushes scattered here and there, and at them had received their death-wound, were still apparently aiming, their rifles resting on the bush in front. On going up to a corpse that was thus kneeling, it fell over on one side, dragging the gun with it, which exploded, luckily inflicting no further injury than a fresh wound on its lifeless holder. He had been shot originally through the heart.

We observed expressions of pain on very few, but some had evidently struggled fearfully with death.

About a hundred yards of this walk through the grim king's property, brought us to the first signs of life. It was a poor little drummer, not more than nineteen or twenty years old at the most, with a delicate look. He, as he told us, had been first wounded in the fleshy part of the thigh, and had endeavoured to keep up with his company. He had to relinquish this attempt, however, being forced to drop from loss of blood; and while thus lying on the ground helpless, a bullet had shattered his left ankle. We gave him a drink from our flasks, which we had not neglected to fill at Jaquin's, and proceeded another hundred yards through dead and a few dying Prussians, when we came to a space free from corpses, about fifty yards wide and long, like a lane. On the other side of this lane lay the French.

Here we found nearly as many wounded as dead. Not that the Prussians had attended to their own soldiers first, as a matter of course; but inasmuch as the French lay further from the town of Gorze than the Germans, the *krankenträgers*, or sick-carriers, came to them last; for every one here had to take his turn. The Prussians had, however, done what they could for them. They had established a couple of ambulance-waggons not far from where the French lay, and shortly afterwards, when I paid this field-hospital

a visit, I found that the doctor in charge had scarcely any but French patients. To the right of the road which we were on lay chiefly bodies of the French 73d Voltigeurs of the line, and foremost among these, about forty yards from the nearest German body, lay a sergeant.

The disposition of the corpses of the two armies was very remarkable; and it was quite clear that whatever had happened at another part of the field, nothing like crossing bayonets had been arrived at here. The French division at this particular point was commanded by General Froissard, and, with the exception of one regiment and a battalion of the 5th of the line, was composed of veteran soldiers of the Imperial Guard—Grenadiers, Chasseurs-à-pied, Voltigeurs, and artillery. This we were not aware of, until, diverging to the left of the road, we were struck by the size of the corpses, which led us to remark the uniforms, when we at once recognised the dark-blue coats and white hussar facings of the "Old Guard." We now saw that the whole fight at this point had been maintained by the troops of this noble *corps d'élite*. From our elevation yesterday we had particularly remarked how splendidly they had met the Prussian advance; but only, as night drew on, to prove once more that German numbers were more than a match for French quality.

Some few of the facts I am about to relate have already been ably described by the companion who accompanied me throughout my sojourn with the Prussian army, and who was acting as military correspondent for one of the London papers. I give them here, as some were mutually witnessed by us, and for the benefit of those who have not had the good fortune of reading his graphic accounts. We saw among these warriors, as they lay broadcast on the earth, many signals of distress made in various ways: here was a ramrod stuck in the ground with a piece of white paper on it to catch the eye of the *krankenträger*, lest he should overlook the spot where lay one who had still the breath of life in him; there a bayonet with a piece of red cloth on it. We went up to one of these. There lay a noble soldier, shot through the lungs, and from the ragged hole poured out at the same time his life-blood and breath. My companion, leaning down, begged him to drink from his flask; but he shook his head, and an expression of mingled pain and longing came over his features as, gazing wistfully at the revolver I carried in my belt, he breathed the words, "Que votre ami me donne un coup de pistolet, voilá tout ce que je demande."

I will not distress you with many more of these harrowing accounts; but follow me to yon shining

rapier sticking up in the ground, while my companion arranges as best he may this poor mangled creature. That sword betokens the presence not far off of an officer, and it is his signal.

Too true; there lay on the ground, fast dying, a fine grey old soldier, a lieutenant-colonel of the Grenadiers of the Imperial Guard. On his left breast, amongst many other decorations, I recognised our own Crimean medal; on his right he bore the red decoration of Death. His charger lay close to him, almost torn to pieces by a shell, a fragment of which had shattered the sword-hilt and hand of his gallant master, and inflicted a dreadful wound through his chest. I attempted to talk cheerfully to him, asking him to tell me his address and the names of his relations. But I had come too late. He had lain thus for twenty-four hours; and when he attempted to answer me he failed, and, instead of words, I heard a gurgling sound from the hole in his chest as he bled internally. My comrade had wandered to another part of the field; but I could not leave this wretched sufferer, so I pulled over a knapsack which lay near and sat down by him, placing his head between my knees. No sound of pain came from his handsome mouth. I suppose I had been sitting thus for ten minutes or a quarter of an hour, smoothing back his short grey hair, and pouring

cau-de-cologne, of which I had brought a bottle with me, on his burning forehead, blowing on it as I did so, when he stretched out his left hand, and made an effort to draw his sword from the ground: he failed, and motioned me to bend down to him. I placed his head on the knapsack and knelt down by his side. He then murmured these words, pointing to the rapier, "Vous êtes un veritable ami: prenez mon pauvre epée en souvenir de moi," he said; and continued, laying his hand over his medals, "mais je vous prie de cacher mes medailles; quand je suis mort, qu'elles soient enterrées avec moi." It was the last request he ever made in this world, and the effort of making it hastened his end. I placed his head again on my knee; and I suppose some sudden attack of internal bleeding set in that I did not notice, as he had scarcely been in this position for a minute when he breathed a vast sigh, and with it I am sure his last breath; his head became heavier than I had felt it, and I knew that Death's hand had caused the extra weight. I laid him down and took his medals off his breast. I then slit the lining of his tunic and placed them inside, and sewed up the cut with a needle and thread, which I took from a bobbin that almost every soldier of France carries in his knapsack. I then left this so lately fine old man with a heavy heart, and hastened to the am-

bulance to see that he might receive fitting burial. His sword I now have. It is a beautifully fashioned small sword, bearing his name on it. The hilt is literally torn to pieces; and the whole forms a fitting relic of a warrior's deathbed on the battle-field.

When I reached the field-hospital which I have before mentioned, I found my companion had already arrived there. I told my sad tale to the head surgeon, and he at once offered to let me have two men to bury the officer, but that there could be no firing-party until next morning. I thought that probably by that time the poor corpse would have been rifled, so I thanked the surgeon and led the way to the spot, followed by two soldiers. Without any ceremony we dug a grave about five feet deep, close by the colonel's horse, and placed his body gently in. A few minutes sufficed to return the mould to whence we had taken it, and then all was finished. The soldiers went away, and I stopped for a few minutes, thinking which was to be most pitied—he who lay there at peace, or a wretched wife weeping at home in anxiety to know where was her husband, and yet to learn that the father of her children lay already in the cold ground, never more to glad them with his gallant mien. I then wended my way back to the ambulance.

I had to walk through a positive labyrinth of

corpses; and when I again reached the ambulance, the first things my eye rested on were two long rows of stretchers, each stretcher having on it a helpless body waiting for the operating surgeon. They were almost all French soldiers, and were lying in a burning sun. Noiselessly moving from one to another were two priests performing the last rites of the Roman Church for those who believed that they would soon be in the presence of their Maker. Two soldiers came forward and took up a stretcher on which lay a private of the Grenadiers. Both his ankles were shattered; and on seeing that they were going to take him to the amputating table, he groaned piteously. I went up to him. "Sir," he said, "these doctors are very kind, but I fear they are going to cut off my legs without putting me to sleep, and I shall die of the pain. I cannot make them understand what I mean." I at once reassured him; and I need not add that my request to the surgeon to administer chloroform was quite unnecessary. The poor fellow still groaned piteously; and wishing to encourage him, I pointed out a soldier of the line who was lying close by, awaiting exactly the same operation, his ankles being shattered and twisted on one side; but this latter had also a terrible wound in the cheek, into which you might have put an egg. Not a sound

escaped from him; so I showed the grenadier how much better off he was than this comrade of the line, and said, "N'oubliez pas, mon brave, que vous êtes de la Garde Imperiale." "Vous avez bien raison, mon ami," he replied; "mais, malheureusement, je suis aussi mortel!" I could make no response to this. Giving him a drink from my bottle, I turned to the other poor fellow; he smiled at me, and as I gave him a sip, I remarked, "Do not think of the operation; they will give you chloroform, and you will know nothing about it." He replied, "N'importe le chloroform, monsieur! mais donnez-moi un pipe, je vous prie!" Tobacco was a much scarcer commodity than chloroform just then, but I happened to have a little with me; so I filled and lighted a pipe which I had, placed it in his mouth, and left him to all appearance as contented as possible. Thus do men differ in character. Before I left him he insisted on my taking with me a wooden pipe in the shape of a horse's hoof, which lies before me as I write.

I cannot leave this sad spot without giving a little instance of how impartially the Prussian doctors yield their assistance to the French and their own countrymen. The surgeon begged me, if I had anything left in my flask, to give it to the poor wretches who were lying on the stretchers. I at once handed

him the bottle, begging him to do so, as the contents were strong, and he would better understand how much to give. He began at once at one end, and in order helped each sufferer. A Prussian who was lying fifth, and whom he did not deem so much in want as others, he passed over. I begged him to keep a little for himself, but he poured out the last drop for a French sergeant who lay just before a German *unter officier*.

I conversed a short time with one of the priests. He was a very young man. He tendered me his address, remarking, in a tone of voice that suggested a proficiency at high mass celebration, "Je suis né prince, mais je mourirai prêtre." For all that, however, he had, I discovered, a capital glass of wine, "pour les blessés," in his carriage hard by; and on my asking him why he was carrying off all those mitrailleuse ammunition-cases, some ten or twelve of which I observed in the boot, he said in his solemn tone, "I take them, as they will be very useful to carry my cigars at home."

It was now about six o'clock. A brisk fire among the outposts had been going on some time, and now and then we could hear the chassepot bullet, as a stray one flew over our heads: once or twice we even fancied that we were being fired on intentionally; but this could not have been the case, as we could see the nearest French

outposts about a mile off beyond Gravelotte and then the immense distance that a chassepot ball sometimes strays is notorious. It makes two distinct noises. When in its most dangerous flight it makes a prolonged and musical ping as it passes you. When nearly spent, the ping is changed into a whistle. I am thankful to say I have never had any practical experience as to the comparative danger attaching to these two sounds; but my companion received a bullet through his hat as early in the campaign as the little affair at Saarbrück.

You may imagine we were thoroughly oppressed by the sights we had witnessed to-day, and determined to return now to Gorze. As we went, we turned out of our direct road to examine the effect of the Prussian shells on a little cow-house which we saw at about the middle, and to the rear of the French position. We looked through the iron bars of the window, and there we saw the corpse of a French soldier thrown back, but still in an erect position, leaning against the wall. The head was almost destroyed, and the sides of the room, which was not more than 8 or 9 feet square, were plastered with bits of flesh from a comrade, who must have been literally blown to pieces. Going round to the door, we entered the stalls. Here was a sight; some twenty or thirty dead bodies! It must be understood that the entire house was not

more than 25 feet by 20. We were on the point of leaving, when my companion noticed what appeared to be the only living being besides ourselves. This one had apparently made himself comfortable, having crawled up into the rack, and was seemingly asleep. We got into the manger to awake him, and lift him down if he was wounded. Now I could see his face, it was truly a picture. His hair, mustache, and imperial, were snowy white; he could not have been less than sixty years old, and yet he was only a private—but of the "Garde." He was asleep, but no sleep that we could wake him from. Yet so little of death did he carry in his expression, that when I took hold of his hand I started as I found it stiff and cold.

It is not to be wondered at that my companion complained of headache and sickness after such a day, and I feared he was going to have an attack of cholera. We hastened back to Gorze, and found that our regiment, the 33d, had bivouacked on the spot where we had slept the night before. I brought them some *tentes d'abris* that I had carried from the battle-field, and for these they were very thankful. I did not see the use of sleeping in the open when I could get a house; so I set out for the town, and found everything much more orderly than I had left it in the morning. We wended our way at once to Jaquin's, which, as

before, we found besieged by a host of thirsty soldiers; but now they had all got their *thalers*, nor did they give with a sparing hand. We entered the house, and at once went to see the poor young adjutant. We found him in a very low condition. In our absence the doctor had extracted the ball, which had, as I said before, inflicted a wound in the centre of his chest, and had then glanced round his left ribs and lodged in the muscles of his back. The surgeon told me he had met many similar wounds during the war, and that he considered it would be difficult to invent a less dangerous bullet than the chassepot rifle carried. We all know how easily conical bullets are turned; but surely in no war have there been so many wounded men able to return to their work after having been struck in dangerous parts. For instance, this young fellow that I am speaking of now had a wound that to a casual observer was in a vital spot; in four days he was walking about, rather thin, but apparently not otherwise much the worse, and by this time I have no doubt he has again joined his gallant corps.

At the risk of being accused of egotism, I cannot here refrain from recording the comforts that, for the first time since leaving Saarbrück, I enjoyed. We left the sick-room and walked through Jaquin's house to the back, where we found a beautiful little

garden, with trellises hung with fast-ripening grapes. It was in a corner of this garden, as I shall never forget, that the greatest luxury lay, for there stood a pump, and underneath it a large stone tank. Our eyes sparkled with the same thought. There was only room for one in the tank; so hastily searching for and producing a piece of money, we without further parlance proceeded to adjudicate, in the good old English way, as to which should first pump, and which be first pumped upon. I won the toss, and hastily parting from clothes that had literally only once left my side during the vicissitudes of the last ten days, enjoyed a most refreshing bath. Not having our kits with us, we proceeded to wash the apparel we had taken off, and for the next hour must have presented the appearance of two Adams in what to us was certainly a garden of Eden. On going into the house we found that Jaquin, grateful for our efforts to preserve his stores, which, thanks to the moderate temper of the Prussian soldiers, were effectual, had everything needful for us prepared, even to a comfortable double-bedded room. A basin of *bouillon*, a good omelet, salad, and fried trout, washed down by a capital bottle of burgundy, formed a pleasant termination to a very sad day.

CHAPTER VIII.

I DID not wake with happy feelings the next morning, although the sun was shining pleasantly through the window, and we were surrounded with every comfort compared to what we had experienced lately. I knew that we must have another great battle soon, and any day might be the last to many of my friends. It was five o'clock on the morning of the 18th that we rose from bed much refreshed by our sound sleep. We sallied out into the town shortly after having repeated the pump process, and succeeded in procuring a fine fillet of beef. A portion of this we ate for breakfast, intending to take the rest to our 33d at the top of the hill. For them we set out at seven o'clock, having mended our clothes, which were much torn. When we got to where we had left the regiment last night, they had already gone forward, and then we felt that to-day would be the great battle, and we were sorry that we had not bivouacked with them. On, there-

fore, we went, over the old ground of yesterday. The wounded had now been all removed, and groups of peasants here and there, accompanied by a firing-party of Prussians, denoted that the hard task of burying the dead was going on.

We turned off towards Gravelotte, leaving Rezonville on our left. Not knowing for certain that the Prussians were in force at the former place, we pulled out our field-glasses, and began scrutinising it, as it lay about 1200 yards off. We satisfied ourselves that our cavalry occupied the village, but also that the French outposts were disagreeably near. We were hesitating as to what course to pursue, when a general of division, with his aide-de-camp, rode up to us, and begged us to let him see with one of our glasses. He then inquired who we were; and on seeing our pass from General von Göben, he at once introduced himself, and with the greatest courtesy gave us the whole programme of what was afterwards known to the world as the battle of Gravelotte.

Before repeating his conversation, I must explain to you the position that the French occupied. I calculated their strength to be about 110,000 of all sorts. This army was deployed in line of battle along the road from Metz to Verdun, which at this point ran at right angles to itself, and was joined by a road which

led north in the Thionville direction. This road was also occupied by the French, whose line thus extended about due north and south. Their centre to their left, if I may make use of the expression, lay at St Hubert and Moscau. I make use of the expression "centre to their left," because, though the farms of Moscau and St Hubert were, and always have been, spoken of as the centre of the French position, in point of fact they were considerably nearer to the extreme left than their right, which rested on the village of St Privat, about a mile and a half to the north of St Hubert. About a mile to the rear of this position, consequently to the east, were the Forts of Plappeville to the right (an immense earthwork redoubt), and of Mont St Quentin to the centre. Metz lay, again, to the south-east of, and immediately under, Mont St Quentin. When I add that, besides the French position being at a considerable elevation compared to the Prussian, there was a deep glen to be crossed some hundred yards wide, and some thousand yards distant from the Thionville road, which was lined with tirailleurs, the strength of the position will at once be apparent.

The Prussian Army Corps engaged in this fight were the 12th and the Guards Corps, on the left of their position, at St Marcel, Doncourt, and Verne-

ville. Towards the left, also, but nearer the centre, were the 9th and 10th. Gravelotte, or about the middle of the Prussian line to the right, was held by the 8th Army Corps, while hidden in the Bois des Ognons lay the 7th Army Corps. In reserve, to the rear of Gravelotte, was the 2d Army Corps. The Bois des Ognons is a small forest, extending from the heights on the north-west of Gorze, to within a thousand yards of Gravelotte, where it is joined by the forests of Ar and Vaux, thus forming a continuous line of wood on the Prussian right.

It will be seen from this statement that there were no less than six entire Army Corps engaged on the Prussian side. Besides these were the artillery of the 3d Corps, and the 2d Army Corps in reserve, which had also to be called upon towards the close of the day. Thus taking each Army Corps at 33,000 strong (rather under than over the number), there was a total strength of 231,000 Prussian troops, more or less, engaged, as opposed to not more than half that number of French. This, in fact, is the only solution that offers itself in explanation of the complete defeat the French sustained. For, as you will presently see, the Prussian commanders had two plans of action, the alternative one of which they carried out perfectly, though at a terrific sacrifice.

I hear some warm Prussian partisan cavilling at my explanation of the Prussian victory. I cannot help it; when one writes an account of a battle, one must put aside feelings of partisanship, and try to deal out to each combatant his fair share of praise. I do not say, as many have said, that the Prussians in this war have *always* owed their victory to superior numbers and superior generalship; but in justice to the French soldiers in action on that memorable 18th of August, it is a pleasure to me to be able to record my opinion, backed up as it is by that of a British officer who has seen much service, that not a battalion could have been spared that day from the attacking army. No one appreciates or marvels at the Prussian soldier's valour more than I; but he is not immortal, and his courage at this particular battle would have been unavailing but for the presence of overwhelming numbers.

I think that the reader now, bearing in mind the two positions as described above, and further assisting himself with the map, will have no difficulty in understanding the plans of action intended to be adopted by the Prussian generals, as explained to me by one of them at ten o'clock, or half an hour before the battle began on the 18th August 1870.

Having thanked us for the loan of the glass, he in-

formed us that General Steinmetz had decided to attack the French in the strong position that they now held, if they did not actually retire under the heavy guns of Forts Plappeville and Mont St Quentin, his object being to drive them completely into Metz, and not to leave them alone where they now were to throw up rifle-pits and redoubts. He went on to say—"It has been decided to make a slight attack at the commencement on the enemy's right. We hope thus to tempt General Bazaine from his strong position at St Hubert and Moscau. Should he be thus deceived, we can immediately throw between him and the Forts St Quentin, Plappeville, and the town of Metz, the whole of the 7th Army Corps we brought up from Gorze last night through the Bois des Ognons, and which lies concealed by it at this present moment on our extreme right. Should the course of events happen thus, we have troops enough to surround Bazaine and his army. But if we cannot cut him off from his position, we must attack him at any risk, and drive him into Metz."

Without doubt, had Bazaine fallen into the trap set for him, when a feeble attack was made at the commencement of the battle by our left, and abandoned his position in the belief that the Prussians were not in great force, the disaster at Sedan was not more

complete than his would have been. The general pointed out to us, about half a mile to the rear of Gravelotte, the Staff position, and rode on.

As we walked forward over this part of the field of the 16th, we noticed a great many dead horses; in fact, we could trace the line of retreat across the brown plain taken by the French artillery, marked by a dead horse or horses every seventy yards or so, surrounded by mitrailleuse ammunition-cases. This clearly showed us that the French had fought every inch of the way in their retreat on the 16th. One wretched animal I have not been able to forget amongst the many sights of human suffering I witnessed. He was wandering about, trying fruitlessly to get a bite of grass from the ground, worn bare by the tread of many feet. When he saw me, he came to me from a long way off. I then noticed that there were no less than five bullet-holes in different parts of his body, besides his withers being torn by a shell. He would follow me about, with wistful hungry look, but I could do nothing for him; and I am afraid, like many others which were wounded and not shot dead in battle, he starved to death.

On coming up to the Staff, we found close to it an immense park of artillery, waiting to go into action on the Prussian right. General von Göben was there.

About half a mile in front of us was Gravelotte, and deployed immediately behind it in contiguous columns was the 40th Regiment. The scene was altogether very striking; General von Göben surveying the view before him, surrounded by a numerous staff of all regiments; the 33d, 60th, and 69th regiments taking up ground in the Verneville woods, to the left rear of Gravelotte; everything getting ready, as it were, for the horrid carnage about to ensue. Presently a general of brigade and aide-de-camp rode up and delivered a despatch. Within five minutes the artillery of the Guard on our extreme left opened, at first feebly, on the right of the French position, and then against the hamlet of Malmaison. The French returned the fire at once from Moscau.

In half an hour it became quite evident that Bazaine was not only not going to be drawn away from his strong position to attack the enemy's right, but that he was quite aware of the disagreeable proximity to his left flank of the 7th Army Corps. Suddenly seven or eight 4 and 6 pounder field-guns, which had been protected on the Thionville road by earthworks, began to rain shells into the Bois des Ognons.

No sooner did General von Göben perceive this, and that the French generals this time were not

to be out-manœuvred, than he gave the order for a general attack. In a minute some forty or fifty guns were set in motion for different positions, and in five minutes more these batteries had taken up position to the right and left of Gravelotte, and along the skirts of the Bois des Ognons, and were pouring a destructive fire of shells into Moscau, Malmaison, and St Hubert. An hour after the first shot had been fired on the left, the action had become general, and extended over a line of, about two miles, stretching north as far as St Privat, south as far as the Bois des Ognons and Bois de Vaux.

The Staff had now all disappeared, and, with the exception of an old broken French gun-carriage, and three or four batteries of artillery in reserve, we found the spot, a minute ago so gay with different uniforms, almost entirely deserted. We sat down upon this gun-carriage and proceeded to eat our lunch, watching the battle, and looking out to avoid, if possible, bits of shrapnell that came hurring about in all directions. However, we were well to the rear here, as we had determined not to go into action until we had had a good luncheon, and it would have been truly hard lines if we had received hurt where we were; so we finished our meal with some very good Moselle wine, and were just going forward, when a sight passed

before us that I suppose neither will ever see excelled, and which few people could ever hope to see equalled. I allude to 20,000 cavalry who rode by, literally within ten yards of us, across the Verdun road, as they went to take up ground in a valley to the Prussian left. Strange to say, we did not notice the approach of this fine body of men until they were close upon us. The effect was startling and grand. First passed in solid squadrons three regiments of Cuirassiers — red, green, and blue; then three regiments of Hussars in the same order. We calculated these six regiments alone, of three battalions, each a thousand horses strong, at about 18,000. Bringing up the rear in column, came a battalion of Uhlans, and one of Brandenburg Dragoons.

In describing the Cuirassier regiments as red, green, and blue, it must not be supposed that I mean to signify that their respective uniforms are of those colours. A short description of the uniforms of these *corps d'élite* may prove not uninteresting. Their tunics are made of warm white flannel, bound, according to the regiment they belong to, either with red, green, or blue braid. Their breeches are also white flannel; and over these they have immensely long jack-boots, that can be worn either doubled below the knee, or pulled up so as to cover the thigh. Large

steel spurs are strapped on the instep, after the fashion of the seventeenth century. The helmet and cuirass are of polished steel, and, but for the shape of the former, would add greatly to the fine appearance of the wearers. It always seems too big for the bearer, and forces the idea upon one's mind that he has been bonneted by his rear-rank man. However, the effect produced by large bodies of these troops in time of peace is very fine. When they have been a long time in the saddle, as may be imagined, the white flannel does not exactly deserve its name. The Hussar uniforms are much the same as our own, but they wear tight breeches and Hessian boots instead of trousers. There is one regiment, however, of Hussars, whose officers have peculiar trappings to their chargers: the bridle and martingale are completely embroidered with cowrie shells. These are the Black Hussars, and carry a skull and crossbones on their busby.

As I said, this mass of cavalry had to cross the highroad to Verdun to take up their position. To do this they had to jump a ditch in and one out of the road. Several horses fell from the sheer weight of their riders, and I did not see one that cleared the ditches comfortably. An immense Cuirassier, who had been unseated during this process of crossing, presented a most ludicrous appearance, chasing his

horse over the ploughed field after the squadrons had ridden by.

But now it is time that we went forward to see what we can do for the wounded, of whom by this time there are plenty. The village of Verneville, to the left of Gravelotte, was already in flames. From the French batteries at Malmaison to the left of Gravelotte, all was getting riddled with Prussian shell, and the French had to fall back from that point to some houses on the road between Gravelotte and St Hubert.

We pushed forward until we arrived at an orchard on the side of Gravelotte nearest St Hubert and Moscau, the French position, about 1500 yards off. Here we found two six-pounder field-guns; and at and about them we determined to take up our position. We were here pretty safe from shell, as the flag with the red cross floated above almost every house, and on that account the French spared the village, although two of the most annoying of the Prussian guns were posted there. To the right and to the left, and in the valley to the front, over which we were firing, the shrapnell and shell came thickly, as I found out nearly to my cost later on in the day. The chassepots, however, were busy enough at these two field-pieces; and we were glad to avail ourselves of the shelter of the orchard walls, under

protection of which crowded a covering party of the 60th Regiment.

As I said above, the main position of the French was 1500 yards off, along the Thionville road, at right angles to the Verdun road running through Gravelotte, to the right of whch the two guns were posted. When the French were driven from Malmaison, which was a farm-house almost due left of where we were, and consequently about 1000 yards in advance of the French main position, they retired across to some houses on the Verdun road, about 1000 yards in front of us, and consequently still about 500 yards from their own line. They, as we afterwards found, piled knapsacks in the windows, and knocked holes in the walls, and from this position dealt terrible destruction on the Prussians as they advanced, and on the gunners close by us, six of whom fell during the quarter of an hour we were with them. As they fell, they were carried down into the road, which at this point ran through a deep cutting, and consequently was proof against bullets. But after this road reached the valley towards St Hubert, it took a turn in a direction that enabled the French from Moscau to sweep down with a mitrailleuse everything that showed itself on the crest of the hill towards them. It was at this

point that the Prussian 60th, 69th, and our own dear 33d Regiments lost so fearfully. A little above this the comparatively few Frenchmen held the houses above alluded to, so that any party of our troops attempting to carry their position by assault were not only met by the steady fire of chassepots protected from everything but shell, but were also mowed down by the mitrailleuses at Moscau and St Hubert some 600 yards beyond.

It was about three o'clock that Malmaison was taken by our troops, and it was on some Uhlans who tried to cut off the retreat of some Voltigeurs from it that the mitrailleuse so terribly vindicated its character for destruction. A squadron rode forward with its usual pride and confidence; we heard the growl of the truly infernal machine; we saw an unwonted confusion in the lancers' ranks; they wheeled and retired, leaving behind them thirty-two struggling horses and as many men. They had unwittingly crossed the fatal line of fire; and had they waited to rescue their fallen comrades, three minutes would have sufficed to the French artillerymen to put them in the same helpless condition. We had gone forward to the extreme point on our side of the glen, and with our glasses could plainly see the gunners as they placed the fatal plate in the

hydra-mouthed cannon. Imagine, then, the breathless shrinking sensation that came over us as we saw the light-hearted body of Uhlans, joyous with all the certainty of making a gallant capture, galloping up the opposite slope of the glen, into what we could see was the very line of mitrailleuse fire. I cannot help making use of a hackneyed expression: "Our hearts were in our mouths," and we hoped for the best. We have seen what happened. — Five days afterwards, walking over the spot, in a space about sixty yards square I counted thirty-two mounds— resting-places of the horses.

Not long after this, the houses on the Verdun road became untenable, owing to the precision of the Prussian artillery, which was chiefly that of the Guard and 3d Army Corps, so the holders retired on the main body; but the Prussian 7th and 8th Army Corps had by this time made a considerable advance, and the whole French line was thrown back upon an inner line of rifle-pits, which they had thrown up parallel to the high road towards the south, and at right angles to it towards the north, about 300 yards from it. Our artillery now advanced two guns to the angle that the Verdun road makes with itself; but the infantry had not yet come up to such an advanced position; and so fear-

ful a fire was rained upon these two pieces that General Steinmetz's aide-de-camp of the Guard Artillery felt it his duty to suggest to his general that they should be ordered to retire. General Steinmetz, whose last thought it would seem on all occasions, if I make exception of his own, was for his soldiers' safety, in this instance acceded to the request, and Hauptmann von Schmelling was at once despatched to bring back the two guns that had been advanced beyond support. On riding up, he found but one surviving officer with the two cannon and three men: one gun was destroyed. There were still sufficient horses to bring the remaining one out of action, or to a place nearer supports; but the young officer in charge, proud of his foremost position, heedless of the danger, and vexed beyond control at having to retire on account of lacking proper support, replied, from the midst of his dying comrades and soldiers, "Tell General Steinmetz where guns have advanced, there can infantry be also. Let him send supports to me; I will not retire to them; rather will I die on my gun-carriage, and rest here with my comrades."

He carried his point, and the aide-de-camp had to return with this answer to General Steinmetz. We did not witness this event personally, but I heard the story from Captain von Schmelling himself. The

young officer, it seems, was as good as his word, and did not retire from his position until he had expended his last shot, when he brought his remaining gun, which he had worked with the assistance of three men, safely out of action—for the infantry did not come forward until much later.

Indeed, these latter had a fearful time of it; for, as we observed the next day when we walked up to the French rifle-pits, from them each Prussian as he advanced from 1200 yards distant—except during the interval that he was crossing the glen—was distinctly marked out against the brown fallow like a target. Such was the peculiar shape of the ground that it was impossible to form a correct opinion of the strength of the French position unless you were up there.

We returned from the edge of the valley from whence we had witnessed the catastrophe which happened to the Uhlans, and paid visits to some of the houses in the village of Gravelotte, searching for soldiers and officers of our regiment whom we heard had been wounded. Our search did not take us long. The first house we went into had a room on each side of the entrance passage. These rooms were about 14 feet square each. I entered the one to the left. Here lay six men. Out of this number there was but one who had received only a single

wound. There were none here dangerously wounded. They had for the most part received bullets high up through the shoulders, or through the lower part of the legs about the ankles. Two men had been struck in apparently mortal parts—namely, in the centre of the stomach and the centre of the chest; but the bullets in both these cases had traversed and lodged in the muscles about the vertebræ. I did what I could for all of these. They were all my own friends of the 33d, and had kind smiles of recognition for me when I entered.

I then joined my companion who had gone into the opposite chamber. This was about the same size, and there lay on hastily-arranged straw no less than three majors, one of the 34th Regiment. One was shot through the knee, the other in the ankle, while a third had received a dreadful wound through the liver. One of them had a particularly taking and jovial expression of countenance, such a face as would have been the delight of young children; and I am sure that poor knee had been more wont to dance chubby boys and girls upon it than to be the resting-place of a treacherous bullet. When will the day come that shall see the last of this little pest of civilisation? When will nations cease to deprive each other's little ones of their fathers?

My attention was now attracted to a soldier ser-

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vant, who passed through the room into a small one adjoining. He had a tin of water (a terribly rare commodity just then) and an armful of bandages. I followed him, and saw what at first seemed to me to be a large piece of raw meat on the pillow of an old bed. I soon guessed what it really was, and hastened to the bedside to see if I could render assistance to the poor sufferer. I could never recognise his features; a bit of shell had carried away the lower part of his face, injuring also some arteries in his throat. I took the lint and water from the faithful soldier, who was crying as if he had been the mother of the young officer who lay thus mutilated on the bed, hoping that I might have the gentler hand of the two. It was useless to hope to stanch the blood welling up in the orifice that now took the place of mouth and nose. I got some charpie, and with this bound him up as well as I could. Some time afterwards he was still alive, and may be so yet for all I know to the contrary; but, except in soldiers whose death had been instantaneous, I never saw so terrible a wound during the whole campaign.

It was now about seven o'clock. We turned out of this house to get a breath of fresh air, and walked across the road to our old position by the two guns just opposite. Standing in the middle of the

road we met a major, either of the 60th or 69th Regiment—I forget which at this moment. He held out both hands to us, and grasped ours warmly. He was covered with dust and dirt from head to foot, and positively trembling and nearly speechless with excitement. "My friends," he said, "I have had three horses killed under me to-day, and lost many dear friends before my eyes!" A Hussar orderly here galloped up with a horse. The major sprang into the saddle, and galloped forward to share fresh dangers with his regiment. Immediately afterwards came a young and handsome officer with his arm broken and temporarily bandaged. We could not help remarking his cheerful countenance. He in the most natural manner remarked, "I cannot help being glad, now I have done my duty, that I have escaped with a shattered arm, which will not prevent my wearing our medal."

Leaning against the bank, we met with a private of the 33d Regiment, who, being shot through the hand, was going to the rear. We greedily asked him for news about the officers, and quickly heard sad tidings. Major Rheinhart had been shot dead, having first had two horses shot under him; the major of the 3d battalion was severely wounded; and, finally, Major Baron von Gilsa, our own brave, honest, rough major of the

2d battalion, was lying in an old mill at the bottom of the valley between us and the French, as far as we could understand, shot through the arm and ankle. My companion, ready as he has ever shown himself to undertake acts of peril for the benefit of brother soldiers, at once volunteered to push forward and see if we could find Major Gilsa, that we might bring him to a more sheltered position. So off we started down the valley along the road straight towards the French position.

It was getting dusk, and the fire had slackened a good deal on each side. We had nearly reached the bottom of the hill, and were just going to search for the mill, when of a sudden the fire along the whole French line, now not more than 600 yards off, seemed to take fresh life. It is impossible to convey an idea of the suddenness and brilliancy of this attack of the French. They advanced from the rifle-pits, to which they had retired, and took possession of their original position. We every instant expected to see the cavalry charge down the road on which we were standing. Nothing would have resisted them at that time had they done so; for such was the panic, that the Prussian soldiers in our immediate neighbourhood ran like hares. I say "panic" advisedly, for it was not fear that made them run. In the same way that

one jumps on being suddenly startled, so did the Prussians jump when they heard this utterly unexpected and terrible rattle of musketry.

We of course should have followed their example, for by this time there was not a Prussian soldier nearer us than the French; and had we been taken prisoners, we should have been shot to a certainty, as our Prussian pass would have been discovered. Besides which, prisoners from the battle of Gorze made no secret of what our fate would be did we fall into French hands; remarking that Englishmen had been throughout compromised, from the fact that one of them always wore his uniform with a Prussian regiment and appeared in the light of a combatant. Any cowardly intention of ours, however, was quickly put a stop to. At this moment we heard the ominous humming of a shell. Before we could throw ourselves down, it buried itself in a heap of stones lying by the side of the road not half-a-dozen yards from us. It burst with a noise that would certainly have made an unmilitary man like myself jump out of his skin, had such a feat been possible. Everything seemed in a blaze for a minute, and I believed that I was already in the next world. The smoke cleared away, and with it the illusion. There, to my horror, lay my companion in the ditch. My feeling was, that if struck at all at

that distance by a shell he must be killed, so I sprang across the road to learn the worst. To my great delight, as I came to him, he made an attempt to rise; this, with my assistance, he succeeded in doing, and discovered that, as he then thought, he had only sustained a slight contusion in the side. He could scarcely breathe, and must have been struck on the left side by one of the stones driven by the shell from the heap all about us. This was no time for inquiring into the exact nature of the wound; it was sufficient to know that we were neither of us killed, and that breath was fast returning to my companion. I am half ashamed to say that I could not even refrain from laughing as I encouraged my companion to hasten. He then presented much the same appearance that a schoolboy does after receiving a punch in the wind. It turned out afterwards, however, to be no laughing matter for him. He complained for many days that, though the doctors called it a severe contusion, he was sure bones were broken. Finally inflammation set in; and but for the kindness of General von Göben, who sent to him a first-rate Berlin surgeon, I do not think he would have lived. The surgeon pronounced that an abscess had formed internally owing to the pressure produced by two broken ribs.

While we were getting on as well as we could,

some of the foremost of the French tirailleurs showed themselves at the top of the hill on the opposite side, not 300 yards from where we stood at the bottom. They, fortunately for us, were firing across the valley, which was then pretty well cleared of Prussians, and consequently over us. For some reason they did not advance farther, but we never knew at what moment they might; and so with great difficulty my companion managed to hasten up the hill, and thus we again arrived at Gravelotte with our mission unfulfilled. With difficulty I got him into the first house at which I arrived. I say with difficulty, for the crowd in the village at this time beggars all description.

I have not seen it yet recorded in any journal, but, on the principle of impartiality that I wrote about a short way back, I am bound here to recount what I witnessed with my own eyes. Any one coming up at that particular moment would have been under the impression that the Prussians had been completely routed. Such a stampede I never saw before, and I should think few military men had. Artillery, foot-soldiers, baggage-waggons, ambulances, every species of troop conceivable in our immediate neighbourhood, were rushing pell-mell to the rear. The words "the French

cavalry are coming" were on every Prussian's lips, except the officers, who shouted themselves hoarse with summoning the flying soldiers to "halt." All this had happened in an incredibly short space of time.

I was standing at the door watching it all, and wondering when the French cavalry would come, and when they would begin to shell the village. My companion from within, where he had found a surgeon who was bandaging him up, from time to time asked me how matters went on. As I could see nothing from the door-step but running Prussians, I determined to go round to the back of the house and see if, when clear of the village, I could obtain a better view of what the French were about. I went into the field to the back, therefore, and about one hundred yards' run brought me clear, and to the left of the houses.

I soon nearly had cause to regret my venturesome reconnaissance. Scarcely had I reached a point from which I could command pretty well the French position, and was preparing my field-glass, when I heard the hurtling of a shell apparently spinning through the air straight towards me. Two soldiers were running past me at the time, barely fifteen yards to my left, calling to me that the French were coming. I threw myself flat on the ground, mo-

tioning to them to do the same. I noticed that they only crouched down on their knees. The shell came with a fearful whirlwind about it, and burst with a crash somewhere close to me—I was again safe, and sprang to my feet. What a ghastly sight! I looked towards the spot that had been occupied by the two soldiers. There was a hole similar to one caused by the digging out of a large wasps' nest, and ominous blue smoke was curling from it and from the rifts about it. Close to it lay a shapeless heap of blue cloth. It was formed by the corpses of the two Prussians. I went up to them. The one had his legs cut off, and the top of his head sliced away as if by an axe, so that the brain cavity was completely empty; the other was torn from fork to shoulder.

At this moment I heard, faintly in the distance to the rear, the National Anthem, and I knew that the king in person was rallying his troops. It was a sudden call for these two from the presence of their worldly to their heavenly King. I saw through my glass what I wished to see, and found to my surprise that the French were not advancing from their original position of this morning, which they had just re-occupied, and then returned to the house with this good news.

It has ever been a mystery to the Prussian officers present at this stampede, why the French did not fol-

low up their brilliant [illegible]wards the evening by charging the village of Gravelotte with cavalry. They must have taken many prisoners and guns, and might have gained the position a step further on the Verdun road. To show how convinced every one was that at this point the battle had been lost, while I was away a major of the Prussian army, who was shot through the leg and unable to stand, implored my companion not to leave him alone, but to help him off somehow, as he would rather endure any pain that dragging his broken limb after him might entail than be made prisoner by the French. Anybody that knows the Prussian character will know that it takes a good deal to make one of those officers work himself into a state even bordering on excitement.

My statement greatly comforted both of them; and had more assurance been wanting, we should have gleaned it from the noble sound that I have before alluded to, "God save the King," as it rolled nearer and nearer to us, plainly heard above the roar of the cannon and angry growl of the mitrailleuse. Never shall I forget the expression that overspread the poor major's countenance as I told him what I could hear outside, and how greedily he listened for the first sound of the rich music that should pour in at the dusty old window which I strove to open for him. The

reader may be assured that, loyal as were the two Englishmen who heard the familiar air, they had never in their lives been more glad to hear it than they were then ; for we felt sure that King William was bringing fresh supports for the poor troops who had fought all day with fearful loss, and had just lost the little ground they had gained. This proved to be the case.

The king at this critical point in the day came up, rallying his flying troops with a degree of vigour that would have done credit to H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge on a field-day, and bringing with him the 2d Army Corps, who were perfectly fresh, and, of course, fired by his presence with the greatest enthusiasm. Here we have another example of the wonderful power that the Prussian generals show with regard to their resources. The French continued to fight splendidly, as they had all through the day, and it was not until twelve o'clock that they were again driven from the Thionville road to their parallel of rifle-pits, when divisions of the 33d Regiment — under their gallant Colonel von Henning, my dear friend Hauptmann Wabsall, and Lieutenant Gatung—and the 69th Regiment, took St Hubert. This point they held despite the rain of fire poured on them from a distance of three hundred yards until two o'clock in the morning, when the 2d Army Corps charged and took

possession of Moscau [illegible] rifle-pits. Some time before, Bazaine's right at St Privat had been turned by the Guards and 9th Army Corps, and therefore he had now not a point to hold. So the French army fled across the little valley and through the Bois de Saulny and village of Rozerieulles, which lay between them and Forts St Quentin, Plappeville, and the town of Metz; and from the morning of the 19th of August up to the time I now write, the 9th of October, Bazaine has not succeeded in finding swords sharp enough to cut his way through the web of dark blue cloth so cunningly wrought about him by the Prussian generals.

In these few pages I have only described the part of the battle that came under my particular observation; and though the fight is called commonly the Battle of Gravelotte, it raged certainly as furiously at the village of St Privat, some mile and a half off; and from there to Gravelotte, by Amanvilliers Grange, Doncourt, and Verneville, was nothing but one large *schlachtfeld*. I cannot get out of the habit of using that very expressive word.

The Prussian loss on the 18th I should compute at about 7000 to 9000 in all; while the French, from their sheltered position, I do not think lost more than as many hundreds at this point.

CHAPTER IX.

This battle was, as it were, a climax to the series of misfortunes encountered by the army of Bazaine at the hands of our 1st and 2d Armies, respectively commanded by General Steinmetz and Prince Frederick Charles; and I think if any one will trouble himself to watch the different moves that eventually ended in the checkmate, so to speak, of Bazaine, they will not entertain the opinion promulgated by some journals, that the Prussians have to thank a succession of lucky chances, and not the astuteness of their generals, for their glorious triumphs. I shall now place before the reader a little sketch of the different moves of these three armies, and you shall judge for yourselves.

We will take the battle of Speichern to begin with, as the first important affair that occurred with Bazaine's army. A division of it, under General Froissard, posted on the heights of Speichern and at

Forbach, was defeated and driven back upon the main body in the direction of Metz. This was on the 6th. Both the 1st and 2d Prussian Armies now pushed vigorously forward, in the hope, I suppose, of overtaking Bazaine, and forcing battle on him before he could either get to the strong position of Metz or join M'Mahon, who was retreating before the Crown Prince to the south in a line converging towards that taken by Bazaine; for his army alone would have been vastly inferior to those of Prince Frederick Charles and General Steinmetz. This is the only explanation that I can suggest as to his not having defended some of the many strong positions which we passed on our march from Saarbrück to Metz. He never stopped in his retreat until he reached Lauvallier, a small town to the east, slightly north, and about twelve kilometres from Metz. At this point it is quite clear that the Prussian generals anticipated and expected what Bazaine eventually tried to effect—*i.e.*, his retreat over the Moselle, under protection of and through Metz. Six hours of hesitation on the part of Von Moltke might have altered the whole future of the campaign; but, as he has ever proved himself, that able tactician was equal to the occasion. He ordered the 2d Army, under Prince Frederick Charles, to move by forced marches on to the Moselle, to the south of

Metz, by a flank movement. Bazaine was shortly after attacked by portions of the 1st Army (1st and 7th Army Corps) at the village above mentioned, where he had strengthened himself by throwing up rifle-pits with the assistance of a thousand labourers. The object of this attack was evidently to draw off Bazaine's attention from the 2d Army, which was ordered to cross the Moselle at two points—at Pont-au-Mousson by bridge, and at Arie by two pontoon bridges. Pont-au-Mousson lies due south of Metz, about twenty-five miles from it. Arie lies in the same direction, and at about half the distance. Now, surely nobody, looking at the results of this splendid manœuvre, can say that, because it was successful, and successful beyond all expectation, therefore it was due to good luck. They may say that such a diversion would have been of no avail had the banks of the Moselle previously been put into the simplest state of defence. True it is that 10,000 men could, I believe, have held either point at which the Prussian armies passed; but then, I take it, a general deserves no less praise for designing a brilliant manœuvre because the execution of it is facilitated by his enemy's neglect.

The positions of the three armies on the 13th may thus be described: Bazaine just before Metz at Lauval-

lier; Generals Steinmetz and Manteuffel in front of him with the 1st and 7th Army Corps, and ready to throw two more upon him should he attempt to commence his retreat through Metz until Prince Frederick Charles had gained sufficient time to cross the Moselle at the point determined on; Prince Frederick Charles marching as hard as he could to that point, evidently with the intention of cutting off Bazaine on the other side, the west, of Metz. On the 14th Bazaine is attacked at Lauvallier; he inflicts great slaughter on the Prussians and retires into Metz; he rests in Metz on the 15th, or at all events does not hasten to get away by the back-door, so to speak. And why did he not? I hear some one ask. The answer is most obvious. His attention had been completely diverted from the flank movement of the 2d Army by the attack upon him by the 1st Army. He must have retired into Metz with the knowledge that he had inflicted great loss on the Prussian army, and with the belief that they had sustained a severe check. So completely had dust been thrown in his eyes that he only knew that the army he had just fought with must make a wide detour to get round to him at the west of Metz, and, never dreaming of the trap preparing for him, naturally elected to rest on the 15th, and, for all we know, complete arrangements for the anticipated

siege of Metz. So it fell out that Bazaine was caught and driven back on the 16th August, and, one may say, shut up on the 19th.

If I have succeeded in conveying to the reader what is very apparent to myself, he will, after reading these last few pages, see that the probabilities were, but for this brilliant piece of strategy of Commander-in-Chief von Moltke's having been ably carried out, Bazaine would have been able to pass through Metz, and have either reached Verdun or succeeded in co-operating with M'Mahon. The only style of argument that I can see which could detract from the credit due to Von Moltke for the manœuvre that resulted in the practical loss to France of her best general and many of her best troops, is the argument of the *fatalist*. But when any one sets up the doctrine of luck, it shows that he has scarcely studied the campaign sufficiently to warrant his expressing his opinion at all. I will not stray, however, into a review as to what would have happened had Moltke neglected to set his trap. The mooting of this question will form a fertile plain for military critics to exercise their hobbies on for many years to come.

I did not stay at Gravelotte that night, as I wanted to return to Gorze to see the wounded adjutant. But my companion was wholly unfit for the

six miles' walk between Gravelotte and that town, and so, making him as comfortable as I could in a most miserable little house, in a room where were four others besides himself, I set out about half-past nine o'clock on a dreary two hours' journey over the battle-field of the 16th. I turned my back on the battle, now raging with renewed vigour, and for some time kept the straight high-road, on each side of which rose tall poplars looming through the dark night like two lines of giant sentries. Presently I struck off across the wide plain; and had I not known the locality already too well, there were signs enough that I was on a battle-field not many days old. Occasionally a French shell, pitched further over Gravelotte than intended, would light up a small bit of it. During one of these temporary illuminations, caused by a shrapnell bursting about thirty yards from me and eight or nine yards from the ground, I saw, as it were by magic, a dead French artilleryman and his horse, scarcely having time to see the colour of his uniform when with the returning darkness the picture vanished from my sight.

I hastened on, holding my breath as often as I could, to avoid inhaling the noisome odours that rose from the many corpses which lay unburied. At points where I knew they lay thickly, I would run, to get

past the fever-breeding smell as quickly as possible. It was on one of these occasions, while hastening past a spot where in the morning both myself and my companion had remarked seven or eight French bodies in a heap, that I suddenly stumbled against a mound and fell completely over. I put down my hand to raise myself, and a creeping sensation came over me as I felt it press against something like a hard cushion covered with rough cloth. I then noticed that in the dark I had mistaken my way, falling over the very danger I had tried to avoid, and to lift myself had placed my hand on the still chest of one of the bodies. I hurried forward with more care than before, and soon came to the road, having, in parts of the ground traversed, literally to thread my way through corpses.

I was now approaching the entrance to the wood that I have before described as lying above Gorze, and knew that I should here have to encounter a guard. I did not much mind this, as I knew I had my pass with General von Göben's signature attached to it; but still I hoped to pass unobserved, as sometimes the *unter officier* would be suspicious about the signature, especially at night, when one ought to have the pass-word. This would entail a delay until the officer of the watch came round. I summoned up my best accent, and bid

the two sentries *gut nacht* as I passed, and, to my relief, they took no notice of me whatever.

I passed through the wood without anything of general interest happening, save that between me and the moon, which had now risen and was looking down on the scene of the late disaster with her complacent countenance, flew a very large owl, which I think must have been *bubo aquila.* At the exit of the wood I had to pass two more sentries. These brought me to with presented bayonets, and a rough *Halt!* (the same as our English word). They kept up the reputation that the German soldiers have for being well educated, by pronouncing my pass at once *gut;* and so I arrived at Gorze about midnight, having been on my legs from five o'clock that morning, and passed a day as exciting to the mind as it was fatiguing to the body.

I went straight to Jaquin's, and the honest fellow, having ascertained from the window that I was no enemy, came down and clasped my hand with the most unfeigned delight. He was much distressed when I told him of my companion's mishap, and would not leave me alone until I promised that he should come with his old horse to-morrow with me to fetch him. I went into the shop, and from thence to the little room (it was more like a closet). Here

I had the satisfaction of seeing that the poor young adjutant was vastly better than when I left him; he was in a gentle sleep—the sort of sleep that tells one at once that there is not much wrong with the sleeper.

In the shop lay three wounded men (a Frenchman and two Prussians), brought to Gorze since the morning from Gravelotte. The Frenchman woke up and asked me for some water. I went to the garden and brought him some from the pump that had stood me in such good stead yesterday. I then asked him how he came to be made prisoner. "Oh," he said "*ma foi*, easily enough. I was lying on the ground firing over my knapsack, and was about to retire, when a side shot broke my ankle. I could not go away then, so I lay there firing until the Prussians advancing took me prisoner. I expected, of course, that they would pin me to the ground where I lay with a bayonet; but, indeed, I find them kind enough." Here was testimony to Prussian humanity, and, what is supposed to be a rarer commodity, French *sang froid*.

I now went up-stairs and found that Jaquin had turned his mother, an old woman of seventy, his sister, and her two children, out of bed, to make place for me. Much to his astonishment, I abused

him soundly; but the women were of the same mind as he was on this occasion; so I found myself installed again in a really nice room and tolerably comfortable bed. An ill-defined feeling of excitement kept me awake for some time; and when I did fall asleep, it was with the sound of battle still throbbing in my ears.

CHAPTER X.

THE reader must now be content to follow me through scenes of a more ordinary character than those which I have lately been attempting to describe. In the few days from the 14th to the 18th I had witnessed three bloody battles. At two of these I was present; the third I saw from a distance. In these fights the Prussians could not have had less than 30,000 soldiers placed *hors de combat*. The French loss I cannot attempt to estimate, but it certainly could not have been nearly so severe. But now that for the present the fighting was over, and we knew that Bazaine was really shut up in Metz, I had time to look about me; for I guessed that our Army Corps, with others, would be told off as an army of investment, and that, consequently, I should always know where to find the regiment to which I was attached.

As soon as I awoke on the 19th, I felt that I ought to hasten to see what service I could do to my friends

in the regiment. But I shuddered to think how many familiar faces I might miss among them. I knew that the three majors, all my own friends, were *hors de combat*. What if my dear old Oberst-lieutenant had also fallen! And if he had not, perhaps he would rather be a day by himself to realise quietly what I knew must be the shattered state of his regiment. I eventually determined to put off the evil day that should tell me how many friends I had lost, and devote the present to bringing my friend home on my host's old mare.

For breakfast I shared Jaquin's *pot au feu*, after which his wife gave me some excellent preserve. I could not help noticing on this occasion, as I had often before, the wonderful difference between French and German cooking, even as exhibited by the poor man's *pot au feu*. Though I am no gourmand, I am sure that, were I placed in the neighbourhood of the frontier between France and Germany, without being told on which soil I stood, I should find no difficulty in solving the question *ambulando*, for I would walk to the nearest cottage and beg to be allowed to share the daily meal. It is to be hoped that if Alsace be reannexed to Germany she will impart to the whole Confederation the useful lesson she has learned during her adhesion to France, and so help to supply

the wanting link in the civilisation of a country that has been termed the most civilised.

Having breakfasted, and filled my pipe with such crumbs of tobacco and dust as were collected in the corners of my coat-pockets (tobacco then could not be had for love or money), I was just going to see my patient down-stairs, when Madame Jaquin rushed up, saying that my companion had arrived. The poor old woman positively cried with delight; for since our interference with the soldiers on behalf of her son's property, she, and indeed all concerned, looked on us in the light of protectors, and the value they placed on us was proportionately high. Indeed, wherever we have been, though marching with a Prussian regiment, as soon as the peasants discovered that we were English, and really neutral spectators of the war, the hospitality they showed us has been beyond description. On more than one occasion I have succeeded in getting a bottle of milk, or some other trifling delicacy, for our particular friends in the 33d Fusiliers, pretending that it was for myself; when otherwise, I am sure there could have been no cow within a hundred miles save what "les cochons des Prussiens avaient pris."

I found my companion sitting by the adjutant's bedside: he was looking very worn-out, having been

up all night assisting the wounded who lay in the same room with him. He assured me they expected that the French would attempt to storm Gravelotte every minute throughout the night, and that it was only a few hours ago that he had learned that they had been finally driven into Metz.

I at once perceived that, for the first time since leaving Saarbrück, I should be quite justified in making this a day of rest; occupied by nursing my companion—who, to my vexation, showed signs of fever—and the other wounded inmates of the house. I was not sorry to rest; and having torn my havresack on the previous day beyond mending, I bought a good piece of sailcloth, and, under necessity's instruction, turned tailor while my companion slept.

It seems a slight matter all this detail as I write about it now; but then, to be sitting down in a comfortable room with a comfortable chair was by no means slightly pleasant after having made a tent one's bedroom and a wet potato-field one's sitting-room for the last ten days, with no certain knowledge about food, as to what we should get or when we should get it.

While sitting thus working at my havresack silently —save when some more than usually awkward thrust of the needle brought a suppressed cry to my lips,

as it buried itself farther than usual in my finger—a rap came to the door. On my asking who was there, the door was opened, and a Frenchman in a blouse, and with not an over-pleasant expression of countenance, entered. I had best tell his tale in his own words: "They tell me," he began, "that you and your friend are well disposed to us poor devils of French, and that you can read German. Will you tell me how I can get taken away the corpses of two Prussians who have died in my house—one two days ago, the other last night? I have, besides, four others in my house who will, I think, not long be alive." He sighed, and went on, hoarsely, "I am forced out in the morning to bury the dead at the point of the bayonet; in the evening I return, weary and sick, from the absence of food and the presence of a fever-giving atmosphere, to a house that was my home ten days ago, but which they have now turned into a morgue. I have spoken to several Prussian soldiers about the bodies; but either I cannot make them understand, or when they see that they are not of their regiment, they say they must look after their own comrades. Will you come with me? When you see them, you may know where the regiments to which they belonged lie. The one who died last night has the air of nobility. He

was very young, and cried piteously for his *maman* last night before he died. You might be able to find some letter about him to send to her, poor woman! I have not touched his clothes for fear I should be accused of robbing him."

Such was this poor man's tale, whose appearance much belied his real character, I am glad to say. I of course consented to go with him and see if I could do any good, and followed him down-stairs into the back garden. Through a door in the wall he led me into a winding passage between two other gardens. We now came to a little wicket, and we immediately found ourselves in a small back yard, hung on all sides with vines, the grapes just purpling. As I entered, I became aware that I was close to a sound that had annoyed me night and day since I had been at Jaquin's, but the source of which I had failed to discover until then. In the centre of the yard stood a half-finished deal coffin on a trestle. An old man was busily hammering in the last few nails. Round him stood many more in different stages of completion.

My conductor led me through a back door, and so by a back way into his shop. The shutters were up, and at first the gleams of light through the cracks were insufficient to enable me to see at all.

Presently my eyes got accustomed to the darkness, and my friend in the blouse guided me to a corner of the room. He then went to the window, and slid the shutter in such a way as to throw a narrow stream of light into the corner close by which I was standing. I looked down and noticed that a mattress lay at my feet with apparently nothing on it. Stooping down, however, I perceived the ill-defined outline of a body covered by a sheet. The peasant, coming forward, pulled back the coverlet. As he did so, the face of a mere boy appeared—not a sign of down on his face. His features were very beautiful, though prominent from being much wasted. A woman came in crying, telling me how this poor child had said no word but *mutter*, save that when, remembering he was in France, he had asked them to bring him his dear *maman*. Though the expression of his face was almost smiling, I noticed tear-marks on it. It was as though in death he had obtained what, dying, he had cried for. Who shall say that his spirit released had not been able to go near his poor mother? As I saw more clearly through the darkness he almost seemed alive, but for that weary look and terrible stillness. His hands were white, and he must have been of good blood; yet this poor lad was nothing but a private, and all the reference to him I

could find was, "Kohlsaat, 11th Regt.," sewed into the back of his tunic. It was a cruel sight,—one that remains fresh in my memory.

There was another corpse, and also three wounded soldiers, lying in other parts of the shop. The latter from time to time made their presence known by low moans. Finding that they were all in a very dangerous state, I determined to search for medical assistance at the Hotel de Ville. The second corpse I found was that of a soldier of the 72d Regiment, who had died on the 17th, having been wounded by a shell in the stomach at the battle of Gorze. As I was leaving the house I fortunately came on three soldiers of the 11th Regiment. I told them how a comrade of theirs lay dead and unburied, and they promised to report it to the adjutant. They also undertook to inform the adjutant of the 3d battalion of the 72d Regiment, which was bivouacked close to them. I then hastened to get a surgeon. I found several standing on the steps of the Hotel de Ville. They were inclined at first to be supercilious, but nothing could exceed their courtesy when they found that I was English, and one immediately accompanied me to the shop. I waited with him until I had ascertained whether I could assist him or no; but he told me that these three had all received body-wounds, and that no

more could be done for them than what had already been done.

So I returned to see how my companion was getting on, with my memory stored with yet another sad picture. Before going in I visited the butcher. I found a sentry on guard over the door. No one but those belonging to the Prussian army were allowed to buy meat. I was allowed to enter, however, the instant I showed my pass, and succeeded in getting a nice pair of sweetbreads, which seemed to be going begging for the not exorbitant sum of one franc. With this prize I returned, and was very glad to find my companion up, and much refreshed by his sleep.

Towards dusk Jaquin's sister came into the room complaining that she had a terrible toothache. Telling her that I would go out and get her something that would make her quite well, I went to the apothecary's and bought a few drops of chloroform.

I was just leaving with my purchase when a Prussian surgeon, a little man with a dreadfully worn look, asked me if I could go with him to assist at an operation. He evidently mistook me for one of the ambulance corps, probably from the cut of my Norfolk shirt, as members of that body all wore loose tunics. I told him that I had but a limited experience in surgery; but he did not seem to mind that—in fact, the poor

fellow seemed worked to death, and glad of any assistance. Outside the shop a Sister of Mercy was waiting for him, carrying splints and bandages. He gave her also a large bottle of chloroform which he had just bought. We went down the High Street a little further, and then turned into a house on our right and entered the ground-floor room. Here lay nine victims—seven Prussians and two Frenchmen.

I had only time to take a hasty survey of them as they lay on straw round the room, for the doctor at once led the way up to one of the French soldiers, who lay moaning piteously in the corner farthest from the door. The Sister of Mercy uncovered the sufferer's leg. It had been broken just above the knee by a bullet. It was immensely swollen, and bent into a curve; the poor fellow could not bear us to touch it. Inflammation was rapidly creeping up towards the body, but the doctor wished to make an attempt to save the leg.

He bade the Sister hold chloroform over the man's face; but it took a long time to render him unconscious; and when he became so, he got violent, singing patriotic songs, and evidently forgetful of his present troubles. The doctor now bade me take hold of his toe and heel, and pull as hard as possible, while he replaced the bones as well as he could. Having

arranged them to his satisfaction, and somewhat reduced the curve, we slid the leg into a sort of wire-basket. The doctor then thanked me, and begged me to be there the next day at twelve o'clock.

He was just going to leave the room when I noticed a man whose head was on the ground, while his body remained on the straw. I remonstrated with the woman of the house for leaving him in so comfortless a position, when she calmly remarked, "Il est mort, monsieur." A French corporal, whom I now saw for the first time, who lay close by, at once said that he did not believe the man was dead, but that several of the ambulance corps had neglected to attend to him under the impression that he was. I stooped down, and having pulled the man back to the straw, held the candle to his face. Many, more skilled than the average of those in the ambulance corps, would have passed the poor fellow by; but though I could not perceive the slightest sign of breathing, I found as I lifted him that he was not stiff. Now the woman had said that he had been dead when brought in yesterday, in which case he certainly would have become rigid; so I begged the surgeon to look at him, and he at once pronounced that life was not extinct, but that the poor fellow was nearly dead from exhaustion. He was a chasseur-à-cheval, and had been cut down at Mars la

Tour. His face was covered with blood, and it was not until we cleared this away that we discovered no less than seven distinct wounds. How he came by so many is hard to conjecture. The wound that had brought him off his horse was evidently that dark red line on his right temple. On feeling it we found the bone shattered. His first sign of returning consciousness when he felt the cold water was an attempt to place his hand to his head; but the effort was too much for him. The poor fellow had lain in this state without even having the blood washed off him since the commencement of the fight at Gorze on the morning of the 16th; to-day was the evening of the 19th. The people of the house confessed to having neglected to feed him, believing that he was dead. Is not this a sad example of what may fall to a soldier's lot? His head was bound up, and we left him with the Sister of Mercy to gradually feed him.

When I reached Jaquin's, I found that I had been away three hours. Altogether this was not such a day of rest as I had expected. The next morning, my companion feeling tolerably well, we determined to put off the evil day no longer, but to go and see how it went with the remains of the 33d Regiment. We borrowed our host's old mare, which would have made a valuable dray-horse for a brewer;

and my companion, though above the average size, having with some difficulty bestrode her, we set out up the hill. Though we did not know the exact position of our regiment, we knew that it would not be very far from Gravelotte. I hoped that, as a day had elapsed since we were there, we should find all the bodies on the battle-field of Gorze—over which the reader will remember we had to pass to reach Gravelotte—had been buried. But in this we were disappointed; for, though we could mark a diminution in the number of corpses, still one's gaze could not wander far without being arrested by the too familiar dark objects, until those lying in the distance looked like little black spots, and showed how far and wide death had stalked on the 16th.

After making some inquiries we found our brigade, which was formed by the 60th and 33d Regiments, bivouacked to the rear of Gravelotte and to the right of the highroad. From afar we recognised the familiar shape of the colonel's tent, and wended our way thither at once, through the lines of piled arms and soldiers busy furbishing up the instruments of death which had been so busy two days back. A cursory glance told us that their ranks had been terribly thinned. As we approached the tent we saw, for the first time, that the colonel was safe. He was sitting outside at a

rickety table with two adjutants, who were also our great and much-loved friends, Lieutenants Homburg and Gatung. They were drawing up the official report of their losses, and welcomed us with their usual cordiality. The pressure of the colonel's hand was as much from the heart as ever; but when he tried to speak, he failed in the attempt, and resumed his seat with the air of a man struggling with deep emotion.

We moved away to the tent, leaving him to finish his sad task; and sitting down on his portmanteau, for some minutes I was lost in contemplation of the awful amount of grief that had come to thousands of hearts in the short space of three weeks. Presently he came in, and, sitting down on his bed of straw, began the doleful story. It was soon told. He said, "To-day I command 650 fewer soldiers than two days ago. Amongst these I do not include twenty-four brave and intelligent officers. Ah!" he said with a sigh, "there is joy in the glory of commanding a regiment like this; but only the father who has just buried two or three of his dearest children can know the bitterness of a colonel's lot who lives to bring his regiment out of a severe engagement. Several of my companies are without officers at all, and each battalion has lost its major."

We knew words of consolation would be useless, so we endeavoured to change the topic. We asked if he knew what was the present destination of the 8th Army Corps, hoping that he might reply, "Nach Paris;" but he confirmed our fears by telling us that we were to become part of the beleaguering forces about to be placed round Metz.

We now determined to walk up to the point that had formed the French position, and on our way pass through the bivouac of the 60th Regiment, and make inquiries for our friends. There a still sadder bulletin awaited us. The major of the second battalion informed us that the regiment had lost 930 men *hors de combat*, besides 38 officers. This regiment had thus lost nearly one in three. We went on, and presently came to the valley in which we had been on the evening of the 18th. There was the heap of stones into which had pitched the intrusive shell, and like true Britons we searched for a relic, and each succeeded in finding a ragged piece of iron. Pocketing also a stone from the pile, we continued up the other side of the valley. Discarded boots, helmets, bits of rag, strewed the way plenteously. But the bodies here had nearly all been buried; for the Prussian generals had decided that the regiments which were going to do outpost duty on this side of

Metz should push forward their bivouacs to the battle-field of the 18th. As we neared St Hubert we met a gang of at least 200 peasants under escort. At first we supposed that they had been turned out to commence the earthworks; but on inquiring of one of them, we found that it was the unwelcome duty of burying the dead that had been forced on them. At the French position about Moscau we found no dead or wounded, and did not see many signs of either. In fact, everything tended to show that this point was wrested from the French at a fearful sacrifice to the victors.

A description of the ground as I stood at St Hubert looking toward Gravelotte and the Prussian position of the 18th may not prove uninteresting. Gravelotte is about 2000 yards distant, and though lying high, looks, from where we are standing, quite low down. The ground slopes gradually from it to St Hubert, except where runs the valley, or, more strictly, glen, that I have spoken of before. The dip into and out of this is sudden. The land about us has the appearance of being fallow; but whether from its being trampled brown, or broken up with the plough, I know not. What was the farm of St Hubert has been left with scarcely one stone upon another. In one side of the farm-house of Moscau I

counted thirty-six separate shell holes. It formed one end of the house, and was about 30 feet high, and 24 broad, and presented something of the appearance of an immense sieve. Everything in the shape of a wall or a bank had been utilised to the utmost by the French tirailleurs. It is a curious circumstance that two of the hamlets taken by the Prussians at the battle of Gravelotte were named respectively Leipsic and Moscau.

Turning our back to Gravelotte, we can from here get a perfect view of the different points on which the French retired. Towering over us and in the middle ground, about two miles off, lies the hill of Mont St Quentin, having on its top a fort of that name, looking at this distance not unlike a *kepi* perched on its head. To the north of this, separated by a dip in the land, is the great earthwork of Plappeville.

Over these two hills the French were swarming like ants, and busy strengthening these already formidable fortresses. Wishing to ascertain the nature of their work, I surveyed them with my glass, and saw that a large number were employed connecting the earthwork of Plappeville with the permanent fort St Quentin by a line of redoubts. In our foreground, between us and these two heights, is a valley, into which a spur of land runs out from where we stand, cutting it, as it were, into two. If you look down the

valley to the south, your eye rests first on the village of Rozerieulles, and next upon Metz, immediately under and to the south-east of St Quentin, so that this fort covers the whole town. You observe that on the opposite side of Metz there are comparatively no hills. The cathedral stands prominently forward. In the other valley to the north you cannot see far; in fact, Plappeville, or about two miles off, is your limit. In it lies the village of Lessy and part of the Bois de Saulny. This was one of the most dangerous of the outpost stations; for though our foreposts were placed right up to the wood on our side, yet the French held the cover protected by the 24-pounders in barbette at Plappeville and St Quentin.

The Prussian engineers did not fail to turn to account, by every species of artificial means, the natural strength of the ground. Parallels of rifle-pits quickly appeared at all sorts of cunning angles along the edges of these valleys, which, filled with soldiers, could sweep death and destruction to any army approaching from Metz. The French evidently quickly found all this out; for, although they could derive very little good from getting out of Metz on any other side, they have never made a single attempt to break through on this. Outpost affairs, however, were very numerous in this direction.

As we walked back we met the whole of the 15th division marching up to take ground nearer Metz. The 33d Regiment drew up their camp about 300 yards from the top of the hill. It was the first time we saw the regiment under arms since the action, and many were the kind faces I missed as the columns passed by. Each regiment had its band playing the most beautiful dance music, generally of Strauss's composition. The sad faces and joyous music formed an incongruous siglit.

Finding that the *proviante colonne* was again behindhand, and that our comrades had not too much to eat, we presently took the opportunity of quietly setting out for Gorze, without wishing good-night lest they should detain us, and we be forced to diminish their already scanty meal. We determined to bring them a good supply the next day. Nothing of moment occurred on our way back. We had again to pass the battle-field, but that was beginning to be quite a matter of course. To-night, I am glad to say, there were no French shells to light up our path. When we arrived at Gorze, we found the poor wounded men very glad to see us, and all of them much better. Jaquin cooked us some chops and an omelette. We sadly missed our pipes, but tried to make it up by using an insinuating but

treacherous compound called "arrack punch." The narcotic properties of this concoction soon proved undeniable; and tumbling into bed I was soon in that pleasant land where a man with a good digestion never meets care.

CHAPTER XI.

MORNING came, and with it the impression that it was a pity arrack punch had so much sugar in it, making it such bilious stuff. We were glad to repair to the friendly pump in the garden, and again indulge in the harmless game of pitch-and-toss, although at the early hour of five o'clock in the morning.

This morning Jaquin came to us, and with a long face brought the unwelcome tidings that his last bottle of wine had been drunk, and that he had nothing left but the common *vin du pays* in wood. We consulted him as to what proprietors in the town had hidden stores, for we made certain there were several. He at last confided to us that his uncle, who formerly had kept the principal inn at Gorze, had, he believed, immense stores hidden somewhere. We at once determined that, without throwing open this store to the whole Prussian army, our own particular regiment should benefit by it; so we repaired to the address

given us by Jaquin. This piece of information, I am inclined to suppose, was not altogether the result of our host's gratitude; I think a little family feud between himself and uncle had something to do with it.

When we arrived at M. Jobart's (so was the uncle named), and informed him that we were English, and, I added—the somewhat ambiguous phrase in the mouth of a neutral—not unfriendly to the cause of France, he hastily ushered us through a long passage into a very bright, cheery-looking drawing-room. This he did with a great air of secrecy, and we could perceive that he took care to conceal this room from every one, as the door fitted perfectly into the wall.

It appeared that his *bête noir* was a Prussian priest quartered upon him, who he said was a spy. I at once remarked, "But the Prussians do not place their spies about unless they have reason to suspect him over whom the spy keeps watch: of what do they suspect you?" This was quite enough to rouse the old fellow's suspicions. He did not answer at once, but looked from one to the other with two cunning eyes, whose close proximity to each other betokened their possessor to have miserly tendencies. He learned, apparently, not much from his survey; for he at length, with a frightened air, rose and said, "Sirs, my time presses, if there is any way I can serve you,

pray let me know." Of course to my request for wine he vowed he had none, and that what he had once was gone for the benefit of the Prussian army.

I did not know whether he was telling the truth or not; but being a pretty good physiognomist, I judged not. So I told him that we had certain information of the whereabouts of his store; that we had not come to rob him, and that we would pay for what he gave us, and keep his secret; but that if he refused to comply with our request, we should walk straight to the commandant's office and state that he had concealed wine-stores, in which case he would have to surrender all,—probably also submit to very rough treatment. He remained obdurate, and we rose to depart. Like a true miser he had no self-control, and before we reached the door he told us, with great agitation, that he thought he had two bottles of wine left, which, if we called in half-an-hour, we might have. We at once replied that we would put off our visit to the commandant for half-an-hour, but that we should require six bottles of good wine and some tobacco.

At the expiration of the appointed time I repaired to his house, having with me nothing more suspicious than a large covered basket with charpie and pieces of lint peering out from the lid. M. Jobart led me to his back garden, and pointed to a

cucumber bed. I stooped down and saw the heads of six bottles peeping out from the ground. I placed them in the basket. He gave me two packets of tobacco; and, having paid for these luxuries, I departed. I never was in want of good wine from that day to the day I returned from the war a month later. In fact, to do the old fellow justice, he behaved handsomely when he found we kept faith with him and paid. I was assured by his fellow-townsmen that he was worth at least 300,000 francs, or £12,000.

As I had to pass the house where I had helped to bind the poor fellow with the broken leg on the 19th, I went in. It was fortunate I did so. He was in great agony; but recognised me with a cry of joy that well repaid me for my previous trouble. I uncovered his leg, and found that violent inflammation had come on. I felt sure that amputation would be necessary to save his life. I gave him a word of encouragement, and, saying I would be back in a minute, went to fetch a doctor. As I passed out I noticed that the pile of straw on which lay the chasseur-à-cheval two days ago was unoccupied. He had died in convulsions, the French corporal who had been alongside of him told me.

I went to the Hotel de Ville, where I found a surgeon who accompanied me to the sufferer. He

at once pronounced for immediate amputation close to the body. He administered chloroform while I went for an assistant; and when I returned with one we found the patient reduced to insensibility. A quarter of an hour after and the poor fellow awoke, minus a leg. He was not the least aware of what had happened, but believed that the straightening process had been repeated. I sat by his side and talked to him; presently he noticed his pain was better, and wished to look at his leg now that it was quite straight. He put his hand down and then discovered that it was gone. He looked at me, and bursting into a hearty laugh, said, "You have cut off my leg?—well, you were not long about it." Then came the reaction; he cried like a child, and at last gasped out, "Now I shall not be able to help at driving *ces voleurs des Prussiens* from our homes."

It was now high time that I returned home with the wine, so I pulled out of my basket one bottle to leave for the benefit of the soldiers in the room, and my packet of tobacco to give each a pipe. At sight of this latter luxury, each poor fellow set up a shout of delight; certainly, when I left them they were as happy as men could be under such doleful circumstances. It may be imagined how I appreciated the tobacco, which I had not seen for four or five days,

when I find a note in my memorandum-book to the effect that on that day I "smoked before, at, and after dinner." This important object attained, we commenced our inquiries about horses. We were very anxious to procure two, in order that we might be at liberty to ride on and join the Crown Prince's army, which we heard was likely soon to be upon M'Mahon again, and to have stirring times. All our efforts proved fruitless. The only mount we could get was Jaquin's old mare, and this without a saddle. We were informed at last that we might possibly find a saddle, and even a horse, at the Chateau St Catherine, a beautiful demesne about a mile out of Gorze. We determined to repair there the next day; but now it was getting late, and we did not care to be about much after dark, as there had been one or two horrible assaults on Prussian officers, and we did not know whether as their supporters we might not come in for a share of the peasants' resentment.

The only time that I heard of a peasant being executed, under at all questionable circumstances, occurred at Gorze. On the advance of Prince Charles's army entering the town, a man was said to have fired from a house at some Uhlans. The *polizei* ascended the stairs and hanged the man out of a window. The story I heard from the mayor

of the town was that an Uhlan, seeing a man's head peep out of a top window, took a pot-shot at it with his revolver; that, the act being an insubordinate one, the Uhlan sheltered himself by avowing that the shot had been fired *out* of a window. In war time, life is of such little importance that of course there was no inquiry, and the man was hanged on the spot. I do not believe the mayor's account, from what I know of the Uhlans.

Another and far more horrible outrage was perpetrated here. A Bavarian officer was brought into a house and placed in a dark back-room for quiet. The young students left him there a minute to seek medical aid, and during their absence a woman—ay! incredible as it may appear—performed the fiendlike act of picking his eyes out with a fork. The wretched man lived but to tell of his feeble efforts to avert this fearful torture, and to recount that it was inflicted on him by a woman; *a* woman was hanged. Of course my experience of war times is limited; but I should think that, all things considered, the 1st Army had reason to congratulate itself on the absence of outrage and the courtesy of the French peasants shown towards the soldiers forming it. And my experiences tell me that Prussian honesty, except in isolated cases, brought its own reward.

On the next day, the 22d, we carried out our determination of walking to the Chateau St Catherine, and paying its owner, whom we found to be a fine old French ex-officer of high rank, a visit. To reach it we had to walk along the road to Noveaut. It was naturally a pretty stretch of road, but everything around it now seemed to have been trodden bare and beaten down by the continual bivouacs that the Prussians had made on either side. We passed a squadron of Uhlans, in charge of a long train of waggons, laden with chassepots and other war trophies.

After a walk of about twenty minutes, a turn to the left brought us to a pretty ornamental bridge leading over the stream, which at this point had been artistically widened, and ran, at the bottom of a lovely Dutch garden, to a lodge. The gates, which were of wood, had been broken, we observed. At the top of the Dutch garden, which in the distance looked like the groundwork of a hall that had been laid down with brilliant tessellated pavement, and formed a strange contrast to the desolation all around, stood a very model of a French chateau. This was the Chateau St Catherine.

We walked past the lodge into the court-yard. Here was a strange sight. The private chapel contained 26 wounded Prussians, the stables as many more; and

eventually we discovered that the chateau itself was given up to the accommodation of some 150 others—making a total of 200 wounded at a private gentleman's country house. The poor old Chevalier had reserved three rooms for himself, wife, and daughters.

Imagine one of our comfortable squires suddenly finding his snug "grange" turned into an hospital for the use of an invader's troops. Imagine wounded men lying strewed over his oaken hall, in his drawing-rooms, best bedrooms, and, finally, imagine that squire bringing forth with his own hands the best wine that he can find in his cellar: you then picture to yourself a parallel case to the one we witnessed to-day. But there was an element of bitterness in the poor Chevalier's cup that would have been absent from the Englishman's. He had been an old soldier of France, and hence the doubly bitter grief of seeing the soldiers of his country disgraced by (as he himself expressed it) the inability of a class to which he had once belonged. A description of him as he walked across the yard to meet us may prove interesting. He walked like a man who carried a burden to which he was ill accustomed. He was fully six feet high when he drew himself up, and this he did constantly as he walked with us and became fired by some old remembrance of his country's glory; his

brow was open and intelligent; pleasant grey eyes, with well-defined eyebrows, marking no mean capacity for thought. At his button-hole he wore the little red ribbon.

Seeing we were strangers, he accosted us most courteously; but finding we were English, the courtesy of his manner changed to great friendliness. He begged us either to accompany him to one of his three rooms, or to walk within one of the beautiful avenues that radiated from his chateau. We preferred to do the latter; and here, strolling along, one on either side of him, he told us his story. The first notice he had had of the approach of the Prussians was given by the advance-guard, the cavalry of the 3d Army Corps of Prince Frederick Charles's army, as it came up from Noveaut (where it turned off from the Moselle), bivouacking on the night of the 15th in his park, and around his house. Now the highroad from Noveaut runs along a valley. As this valley nears Gorze it becomes quite a narrow defile. By looking at the map it will be seen that the above-named army had by that time passed to the south of Metz, and were within, as a horse could go, not more than nine English miles from that town, and yet the Prussian cavalry slept peacefully in this valley on the night of the 15th of August, the

French apparently completely unaware of their close proximity, as in the morning (the 16th of August) we find the latter surprised while quietly on their march to Verdun, within five miles of where their enemies had rested. Is there any accounting for the extraordinary laxity that seems to have existed in the French outpost system? How could they have managed to hide from themselves the dangerous propinquity of the Prussians on the eve of the 15th?

Military men who may pass through this valley in years to come will observe, on the top of a high hill overhanging Gorze, an image of the presiding Madonna of the town. They will, I am sure, at once concede that half a battery of field four-pounder rifled cannon and a single regiment of tirailleurs would have effectually prevented, beyond the possibility of a doubt, any troops from approaching the village of Gorze from the Moselle by that route. And yet we find the French generals not even aware that such an approach was imminent until the Prussians had gained the heights of Gorze without firing a shot; and all because the approach of the latter was concealed by the Bois des Ognons. Now this Bois des Ognons, being on the brow of a hill, and on Bazaine's flank, between it and the only direction in which the enemy could come, the merest

tyro would imagine that if Bazaine did not occupy this wood with a sufficient force to cover his flank until he had got away from so dangerous a screen, he should at least have had good cavalry patrols on the Moselle side of the wood. So far from thinking that he could not do less, General Bazaine evidently thought that he could not possibly take the trouble to do so much, and we have seen the result!

But to return to the Chevalier. He pointed ruefully to his gates broken up for firewood — eleven horses had been taken from him; but he had been paid, had he not? "No, sir, no—not paid. I have received a receipt, and I have every confidence that I shall be; but I do not think about that, nor do I complain about these, for am I not an old soldier myself? and I know that these things must happen in war; but it does grieve me bitterly to see my three young daughters and their mother so rudely handled by fortune."

As we returned to the yard we told him the object of our visit, and that if he had a horse or saddle we would gladly buy it. He at once answered that his horses and those of his tenants were all taken, or he would have placed them at our disposal (not an illiberal speech), but that one saddle still remained to him. This we were welcome to take if we would allow

him to put his own price upon it. We, of course, assented, at the same time thinking it was rather an odd request for such an old aristocrat to make; but he dispelled our doubts by saying, "I beg of you to keep it as a souvenir of an old soldier of France, who was grateful for half an hour in the society of two gentlemen who were capable of looking at this war with other views besides Prussian. You have told me, what I can see myself, that the officers of France have not proved themselves worthy of such titles; but," he went on with great emotion; his voice deepening and becoming louder as he spoke, "you have told me, what I could not see with my own eyes, that my gallant soldiers have fought, though defeated, with their wonted bravery: more than this you cannot say."

Presently a perfect specimen of a faithful old family servant, with hair as white as his master's, came down the front-door steps of the chateau, bearing on his arm a very handsome saddle and bridle. These he retained firm possession of until his seigneur bade him hand them over to us. With a profusion of thanks and requests on the one side, and promises on the other to come and visit in happier times, we retraced our steps to Gorze. This is war-time. Two foreigners come to your house and offer to buy your horse and saddle, and finally, in the gratitude of your

heart for finding some one to speak to besides the invaders' surgeons who are tending the wounded in your country-house, you make the said foreigners a present of the only saddle left to you.

A short time ago I made use of the words, "I rarely saw, and scarcely ever heard of, an act of plunder," by way of qualifying the praise that I accorded to the soldiers of Germany. Unqualified praise, to my mind, is a thing that cannot be due to any mortal, and always causes me to look with suspicion on the mental capacity of the donor; much less can it be due to many mortals undergoing the temptations consequent upon hunger in time of war. Yet in spite of the detestation I have of praise that savours of prejudice, it was not until to-day that I witnessed anything that gave me a pretext for that qualification to my praise of the Prussian, which I consider necessary to make it of worth to the thoughtful reader. The incident I will now relate.

We found, as usual when we arrived at our quarters, a great and orderly crowd of soldiers collected at the door. Towering over them all, on horseback, was a splendid specimen of a red cuirassier, a *feldwebel*, giving quite a wholesale order; for in the outskirts of the crowd we noticed four privates of his regiment with a cart, and inside it a huge cask. We pushed

our way through the crowd, greeted by many friendly nods, and went up-stairs to survey these thirsty soldiers from the window. The door was immediately under where we sat, and from time to time we would extract a roar of laughter from the crowd by skilfully dropping the ash of a cigar or pipe into a cup of wine about to be quaffed. I have found by experience that the Prussian is much more amenable to chaff than is generally supposed; and as, when we were in the house at the time they were making their purchases, we always instructed Jaquin to dole out wine, which we paid for, they did not mind these little jokes.

We had been at the window perhaps five minutes, when an immense young lieutenant of the line, mounted, dashed round the corner of the street, and, scattering the crowd, rode up to the door. At a glance we could see that he was excited by drink, but we were not prepared for what followed. Seeing us at the window, and ignorant of who we were, he told us to come down and bring out the best cognac we had. We so far forgot our prudence as to laugh somewhat immoderately at this request.

A Prussian officer, even in a state of sobriety, would be hardly likely to sit quietly on his horse while two Frenchmen laughed at his requests from a window; and this one being, as I said before, a little "excited,"

was still less likely to do so. Drawing a revolver, he threw himself from his horse and rushed into the shop. His object was clearly the punishment of the offenders up-stairs; and I am inclined to think it a somewhat fortunate coincidence for us that in his hot fury he ran full tilt up against poor Jaquin. The latter tumbled head over heels, upsetting over the lieutenant a tin of red wine which he was carrying to the dry mouths at the door. This event, I suppose, drew the officer's attention to the fact that Jaquin was the server of the cellar. Seizing Jaquin by the collar, he swore that if he was not instantly served with six bottles of the best brandy, he would blow out his brains, and those also of the two up-stairs who had laughed at him; and as an earnest of his intentions he placed the cold muzzle of the pistol against the forehead of our shaking host. At this moment a *feldwebel* of the line, who had been severely wounded by a shell in the left shoulder, and was lying in a bed in the shop, drew himself into a half-sitting posture, and struck with his right hand the pistol clean out of the officer's hand. This act proved the signal for general rebellion amongst the soldiers at the door against the outrage. The big cuirassier came forward and placed himself between the officer and Jaquin (the latter had obtained many friends from his amiability), and de-

clared that he would send for the guard if the lieutenant did not at once leave the shop. Jaquin had by this time fetched a bottle of cognac, which the poor fellow handed to the raging man, who, placing it under his arm, and muttering something about no payment in *kriegzeit* (war-time), regained his horse and rode off. Jaquin at once became the centre of a crowd of sympathisers. The money for the brandy was at once subscribed and paid, and a man, stepping out of the crowd, gave the name and number of the regiment to which the officer belonged. I, of course, suppress both.

We had come down-stairs at the first signs of a row, and had watched the whole scene from behind the shop through the usual glass door; and now that it was over, not wishing that we should be mixed up with it in any way, we returned to our room, and there enjoyed one of the heartiest laughs imaginable at the absurd figure poor Jaquin presented as he tumbled over, upsetting the wine on the lieutenant, who looked hot enough to have made it fizz.

We were not destined, however, to be let quite alone. My side was yet aching from my attack of risibility when we heard heavy steps on the stairs. They approached our door—stopped—and then came a rap. The door opened, and there stood the blue-eyed, long-bearded *feldwebel*, with his long boots

and clanking sword, and behind him several soldiers. It appeared that, having taken counsel down-stairs as to the best mode of bringing the offender to justice, it had been unanimously decided that the English major (my companion), who was much respected by these honest fellows, and the young "Engländer," should be requested to take his name and the number of his regiment to the Stat Commandant, as this would save them the somewhat invidious task of giving up one of their own officers.

I need not say that, though gratified with this friendly confidence, we refused to interfere in the matter, so they withdrew reluctantly. But your Prussian soldier, when he has made up his mind to a thing, is not easily put off; and so determined were these that the outrage should not go unpunished that, on finding we would not help them as they wished, immediately, as they stood in the street, they drew lots from one of their own helmets as to which five should repair with the information to the Commandant. The five on whom the lots fell went at once there, without betraying either joy or sorrow at their disagreeable errand. Duty is a word well understood by soldiers of Germany.

And now that I have given this anecdote as a reason for qualifying my praise of them, I find that

the record of the misconduct of one only serves to illustrate the good conduct of many. Is it not so? This affair, which, but for the prompt action of the *feldwebel* who lay wounded on the bed, might have had a most tragic termination, thus passed off.

The large cuirassier now proved the cause of a most amusing incident. As soon as he had arranged the drawing of lots, taking his chance with the rest, he ordered up the privates who had charge of the cart and cask. Then commenced the operation of filling said cask with red wine. I should think it contained about sixty gallons. This wine would be worth from a franc and a half to two francs a gallon. When the sergeant (*feldwebel*) considered that he had sufficient, having paid for it, with beaming countenance he gave the word *vorwärts*, and began to lead the way. It must be understood that the cask was standing on one end, with the other knocked out, to admit of a more speedy entrance of the wine than could have taken place had it been poured through a bung-hole. It was also in a cart without springs; and at the instant of starting, as ill-luck would have it, the wheel passed over a large stone. One cuirassier was on the box driving, two were mounted, and the fourth, who had been pouring bucket after bucket into the big barrel, was just going to mount the cart to keep all

steady, when the luckless jolt occasioned by the stone caused the cask to give a great lurch; the cuirassier threw himself against it, as the great rotundity came towards him in its counter lurch, but unavailingly; yet another topple—and cask, wine, and cuirassier, amid the uproarious shouts of the crowd, made one common resting-place of mother-earth. He was a veritable red cuirassier now; and as the bystanders helped him up, he reminded me more of a huge piece of bread that had been sopped in wine than anything else. The *feldwebel* eyed his subordinate to see that he was not hurt, and burst into a roar of laughter, that made his cuirass and his trappings shake and clank, and that I should think might have been heard a quarter of a mile away. He then, in an off-hand manner, ordered the cask to be replaced in the cart, and filled with fresh wine; and they departed, with two men successfully wrestling this time with the barrel, as you might see two men steadying a drunken man.

CHAPTER XII.

On the next day, the 23d, with great difficulty we hired a trap (my companion feeling great pain in his side, and being unable to walk) to go up to camp and pay our 33d a visit, which we had not done for some days. We were pleased to notice on our way that, with the exception of a few horses, the business of interment had been completed. Now, in the place of bodies along the road, every hundred yards or so we came to a vast pile of uniforms, knapsacks, shakos, kepis, and every species of regimental munition, French and Prussian mixed together.

For the first time since the 16th we had to keep the road all the way, as in the cart we could not go across country. This led us past the little cow-house which I mentioned before when describing the battle-field of Gorze. It will be remembered that it then contained many wounded. We pulled up, wishing to see what was inside now. I jumped

down, but, finding the door barred, was about to resume my seat, when I fancied I heard voices inside. I went round to the further side, and, stooping down, squeezed myself through a large hole made by a shell in the wall. Inside was a curious sight. Some marauding *markctender* had converted it into a species of store for his plunder. Here, placed neatly in corners, were French gaiters, cooking-tins, sword-bayonets, &c.; on a nail in the wall hung a handsome cloak of the artillery-à-cheval of the Imperial Guard; and two comfortable beds of straw were arranged in the stall just under the rack in which I had found the dead Frenchman. By blocking up the door next the road, and making the shell-hole at the back the entrance, the ingenious tenant had led the far-seeing *polizei* to believe the shed was unoccupied.

We found our brigade had gone forward, and was bivouacked on the Gravelotte side of, but close to, St Hubert, just out of range of the big 24-pounder guns in barbette at Plappeville and Mont St Quentin.

A battalion of each regiment had gone on still nearer Metz for outpost duty in case of a sortie by the French in this direction. We took them out half-a-dozen of wine from our friend M. Jobart's store, which we found them very glad of, for at this time they were badly off for supplies, and cholera and dy-

sentery had made its appearance among them. They had been in this bivouac two days; this time had sufficed to enable the men to make the most perfect little village of tents, having obtained abundance of wood from the Bois de Vaux, an arm of which ran to their rear, while its main bulk was on their right flank. The camp was formed in streets, with a large square in the centre; in the middle of this square the band was playing music of a better class, and as well as you would hear from the best band in our service at Woolwich on a gala-day, or Brighton at a flower-show.

This, though, was the only cheerful element there to-day. The gloom of the weather seemed to have its reflection in the heart of the regiment. As to the colonel, he, as usual, looked bright when he saw us, and asked affectionately why we had been so long absent. We sat round the fire in front of his tent for about an hour; he gave us each a cigar, and our cheery friend Lieutenant Gatung produced a tin of excellent preserved salmon.

We now set out to visit the battalion that was on the foreposts. It was about six o'clock, and bitterly cold. A quarter of a mile farther, and we came to the top of the hill and in sight of Metz, *la Pucelle* no more, with her beautiful cathedral standing out, and

shining brilliantly from the rays of the setting sun as they fell upon the windows.

The battalion of our regiment had to do duty on the heights above Rozerieulles, their most advanced post being situated at the extremity of the spur which I have described as cutting the valley on the west of Metz in two. We visited this point, and could see from it the French outposts, not more than 800 yards distant. These seemed to have orders to fire at discretion; for invariably, when we visited the posts on this side of Metz, ten minutes never passed over without chassepot bullets coming more or less close to us. Sometimes, when we were steadily looking at them with our glasses, we would see a chasseur put his rifle over the fork of a tree and aim for about a minute before he fired a long shot at one of our foreposts in another direction.

Descending the spur on our right, and ascending the opposite side, we came to another forepost detachment, under command of Lieutenant Lehfelt, a great friend of mine, and a most pleasant and gallant officer. He told us that permission had been asked and obtained from the Brigadier-General to search Rozerieulles that night, and that a detachment of our regiment was accordingly told off to make requisitions (*requiriren*).

To understand the full interest of this announcement, it must be understood that Rozerieulles, although unoccupied by the French, could not be occupied by us, as it lay immediately under the guns of Mont St Quentin. It thus lay between the French foreposts and ours—nearer the French than us. Now it was commonly reported among the peasants that the mayor of the village had a capital cellar, well stocked with '65 (a celebrated year for their wines)—hence the temptation to a raid by night. Application had been made for permission (*requiriren*) every night, but had not been obtained until this evening. Lieutenant Lehfelt now pressed us to join, as it would be great fun, and, he added, somewhat inconsistently, "attended with great danger." We finally settled to go with the detachment, and at nightfall Lieutenants Gatung and Lehfelt, and about fifty men and ourselves, walked quietly down to the village. Meeting a peasant, we motioned silence, and bade him point out the mayor's house, keeping him among the ranks lest he should give the alarm.

Having arrived at the mayor's house, a knock speedily brought that worthy man to the door. I suppose he must have expected to see French troops when he heard the tramp of feet; certain it is that when he saw Prussians his very lips were white with

fear. However, he was at once assured that he had only to supply us forthwith with a cart and a cask of wine, for which he should have a receipt, and that we would immediately evacuate the hamlet. I need not say that sentries had been thrown out to the further side of the village, that we might not be surprised in case of the French foreposts getting wind of our close proximity. The mayor led the way to his cellar, a cart was brought round, and a barrel of fine wine was forthwith hauled up through a trap-door, rolled along the entrance passage, and triumphantly lifted into the cart.

This was hardly accomplished when we heard a rifle-shot at the end of the village—a signal that the French were up and coming. In a twinkling the sentries came running up, two men jumped into the cart and cantered the horse up the hill, and the rest received orders to throw themselves right and left of the road, under shelter of the trees and vineyards, and to retreat to the best of their ability on their usual post. A smart but random fire had commenced from the French; but they were evidently doubling, expecting to catch us running up the road, and to be able to touch us up with the bayonet. This was a fatal mistake for them. The cart alone had followed the *chaussée*, and had had time to make good way. So when the French came charging up the hill in

a body of about one hundred, they were clearly visible to the Prussians who were to the right and left, and who immediately fired upon them. This caused utter confusion. The French stopped; they could hear the cart rattling on in front, and yet here they were being assailed from a regular ambuscade. They quickly adopted the best course they could pursue, by picking up one of their number who had fallen, and commencing a retreat. They passed me, as I crouched in a vineyard, about twenty yards off. As they did so, the pale moon shone right out upon them, and by its light I could see from the way they carried their fallen comrade, and ever and anon passed him from one to another, that they might not be tired in flight, that they knew he had no feeling, and was a corpse. When they had gone well down, we formed again on the road, higher up, and had a good laugh over the adventure.

The night was now bitter cold, and we did not see what good we could do by stopping with the outposts, who could have no fires all night; so we passed round our flasks, and having emptied them to the satisfaction of all parties, returned to the bivouac. We found that Oberst-Lieutenant Henning had retired for the night; and it being nine o'clock, and having to drive back to Gorze, we did not accept the kind offer of

one of the young officers to tarry and smoke a pipe with him, but set off at once on our dreary drive across the field of Gorze.

Since we had passed in the morning, the different arms of the dead had been piled along the road, preparatory to their being carted to their last resting-place at the Arsenal, Berlin. It must be remembered that these arms were only those of the poor fellows who fell in the immediate neighbourhood of the road; and as in the short space of about 800 yards I counted no less than 28 stands, comprising each from as many as 110 down to 25 rifles, it may be imagined what terribly truthful evidence they formed of manifold death. Ever and anon we would see what at first appeared a tiny glittering light some ten yards distant from the way; it was only a bayonet we found stuck in some brave man's grave, lit up by the moon, which to-night only shone out at intervals from black clouds.

At one of the heaps I have before described as consisting of all sorts of regimental munition that had been left behind in the hurry of flight, we pulled up, in order to obtain a good relic.

Then, our daily life was so full of exciting interest, that we paid no heed to the heap before us beyond the care necessary to select a good memento for days to come; but now, as I write, and think back upon those

poor torn jackets, the fallen letters, invariably containing the token of some loving heart at home, the empty shako, I can but see how mercifully Providence tempers our hearts according to the scenes we have to witness. We brought away with us two French chassepots and a few buttons, and then hastened home.

My companion on waking next morning complained of great pain in his side where he had been struck. He was quite unfit for another long expedition up to camp to-day; and so, as we had half promised to our friends in bivouac some stores if we could get any, I determined to set out with them myself. I told Jaquin that I should want two men to accompany me and carry the basket; he offered at once to come and bring another. You may fancy, by the preparation of a basket and two men to carry it, that I was going to take up plenty of good things to the poor wet and cold fellows. But there were neither good things nor plenty, and all I could get were two loaves of white bread, half a dozen bottles of red wine, and another packet of tobacco that I had wormed out of the old miser. These, together with a flannel shirt for the Oberst-Lieutenant, however, were then reckoned rare delicacies up at camp.

Poor Jaquin was in a great state of excitement at the thought of seeing the battle-field. He ran along

at first singing and chattering like a schoolboy out for a holiday, cowering back under my protection every now and then as a patrol of the *polizei*, much dreaded amongst the peasantry, appeared in sight.

When we came to the dip, or little valley to the rear of Gravelotte, where on the 18th the 2d Army Corps had lain in reserve, we found the newly-made bivouac of an ambulance column. The sentry accosted me, and I understood him to ask me for a drink out of my flask. Now, I never said "no" to such an application throughout the time I was with the Prussians, except to-day. To-day I happened to have filled my very capacious pocket-pistol with some curaçoa and brandy, which Jaquin had found in his cellar. This I was carrying to my colonel and his officers, and seeing that the sentry was to all appearance in good health, I explained to him that it was for an Oberst-Lieutenant, and that I could not spare it. Jaquin, who had come up, here told me in French that he understood the man to say that my flask was wanted for some one dangerously ill at the ambulance bivouac down below. I questioned the sentry again, when I made out from him that a Frenchman had been discovered starving in the Bois des Ognons, where he had lain since the battle of Gorze on the 16th, this being the 24th of August. The honest

sentry assured me it was for him and not for himself that he had solicited my flask. I hastened at once down to the bivouac and presented myself to the doctor in command, offering him at the same time my flask for the sufferer. He motioned me to follow him to a *tente d'abris*. Lifting up the curtain he bade me look in. I did so, but only to start back against him with horror, as I saw what appeared to me to be a skeleton lying on some straw, having the power to lift its hand towards me.

It was a poor Voltigeur of the line. He smiled feebly, and told me in a faint voice his story. At three o'clock in the afternoon of the 16th, soon after the Prussians had deployed out of the wood, he was struck down, and his ankle shattered by a bullet. He had been in the van of the French, and he lay all day with the fight raging over him. As night came on, fearing that in the pursuit by the Prussians he might get a bayonet-thrust, he dragged himself into the Bois des Ognons, which lay some eighty yards from him. Eight days passed over, and no one came near enough to hail, until this ambulance column. For four days he had subsisted on the two days' ration of biscuit he carried in his knapsack; the remaining four days he kept himself alive by consuming the leather strap at the bottom of one of his gaiters, and

best part of the other. These gaiters are now in my possession.

Like all the French prisoners that I met, with few exceptions, he was cheerful, despite his painful wound and fearfully wasted condition. The doctor told me that except his being exhausted from want of food, he was otherwise in good health; in fact, that the wound he had received might have proved a very dangerous one, had he had anything but short commons. I left the poor fellow, who laughed as heartily as he could at the idea of my carrying off his old gaiters, and in a few days I had the satisfaction of hearing that he had sufficiently recovered to be sent to the rear.

I continued my route, and shortly arrived at our bivouac, which I found had not been altered since the preceding day. As I passed through the lines of the brigade, I could see the men were much amused at the appearance presented by two peasants being marched amongst them. For, thinking that the colonel would not like to have two peasants running all over his camp, and knowing that Jaquin was most indiscreetly inquisitive, I made him and the other man walk immediately before me, and bade them look neither right nor left, or they would be denounced as spies. Thus it came about that

a report quickly pervaded camp that the young Engländer had captured two francs-tireurs, and had brought them prisoners to the colonel. The soldiers came and crowded as near the colonel's tent as they dared, wondering when the order would come to hoist up the peasants; and it was not until a *feldwebel* recognised in Jaquin the honest *marchand des vins*, and announced the same, that they retired.

Poor Jaquin was frequently showing his want of logic by forgetting that although, as he expressed it, all men were *his* brothers (and consequently the Prussians were), it did not, nevertheless, follow that the Prussians and all men would look upon him as *their* brother. And thus on more than one occasion this illogical philosophy brought him to grief, as he tried to make himself *au courant* with certain Prussian habits which he noticed on our way through different camps.

I was glad to find, when I returned to Gorze, that the young adjutant of the 40th Regiment was so far recovered as to be able to walk out in the garden, where I found him sitting in the setting sun-light. On the next day, the 25th, we had the pleasure of seeking out a spring-cart for him; and, placing him gently on some nice sweet hay with his portmanteau and sword, &c., he set off with a beam-

ing countenance to recruit his health in Vaterland. How happy he must have been! Before he left he gave us some valuable stores that he would no longer have need for—little comforts probably packed up with loving care by a mother who will perhaps, when she sees her son so soon again, bless the little bit of lead that, without killing her darling, proved the cause of his early return to her.

CHAPTER XIII.

JAQUIN'S old mare was again put in requisition to-day, my companion being still too indisposed to undertake the long walk to camp. We determined to spend the night at the outposts, and endeavour to enliven the dreary time of watching that our friends on duty had to pass. Arrived at the camp, then, we at once proceeded to join the 3d battalion of our regiment, which was on forepost duty that day. At that time there were six Army Corps guarding this side of Metz, from Augny on the south to Marange on the north; hence outpost duty was comparatively light—that is to say, each battalion had twenty-four hours of it, and consequently had six days of rest out of every nine. Later on, when two Army Corps were told off to besiege Toul, at certain points regiments used to have to supply outposts that absorbed two out of the three battalions composing them.

By looking at the map of the country round Metz that accompanies this book, the reader will see that the road from Verdun to Metz, as I have said before, makes a right angle at St Hubert, turning from N.E. to S.E. The object is to avoid a valley which it skirts. Where it makes another turn to the east, and begins to descend to the village of Rozerieulles, and through this into Metz, we found the first signs of our foreposts. Here was a small guard of the 60th Regiment over about one hundred stand of piled arms, quite in the rear of the foreposts. We guessed at once that these latter belonged to a fatigue party who were working at rifle-pits or something in that way, under the direction of an engineer officer, in the immediate vicinity. The officer in command of the guard recommended us not to descend the road any farther; as although the French had not actually occupied Rozerieulles, their foreposts were scattered all over the vineyards immediately in its neighbourhood, between it and Metz; so we struck to the right of the road and kept to the heights. As we topped the summit we saw at once a large party of soldiers in fatigue clothing, hard at work constructing a formidable-looking earthwork capable of holding six 12-pounder guns. From this position guns could have swept the whole valley, and also

commanded Mont St Quentin, exactly opposite on the other side. The heavy guns of this latter fort would every now and then send forth an angry protest across the valley against such pigmy intrusion; but up to the present time this comparatively small battery, like the gnat of fable notoriety, has proved itself unaffected by the lion-like roar and furious remonstrance of its massive neighbour, stung into madness by it, as it would seem, occasionally.

The engineer officer who was conducting the operations, with great courtesy showed me his plans; and certainly he had not left an angle from which a foe, approaching up the valley, could not be raked, without their having thrown up a line of rifle-pits.

Descending gently now, always continuing to the east, we came to the brow of the hill just above the villages of Jussy and St Ruffine, both occupied by the French. An arm of the Bois de Vaux concealed the Prussian operations at this point, which on this side of Metz was their most advanced position. It was also the most dangerous; for, though the wood, as I have said, screened the Prussians from sight, yet the French knew well enough that such a position would not be neglected; hence it was that constantly that irreverent messenger, the 24-lb. conical shell, came crashing through the trees to see what was going

on upon the opposite side. One of these had just fulfilled its mission with fearful severity: we heard it burst before we came up, and saw its smoke drifting its way through the trees. Generally they had not done much harm; but on this occasion we saw, as we approached, commotion enough. As we came up, four men were bringing the mangled and shattered remains of a body out of the wood. It appeared that eleven of the poor fellows who had been on duty all night had retired to sleep in one of the little huts which I have before said the Prussian soldier is so clever at making: they had not been resting more than half an hour when a large shell from Mont St Quentin pitched right into the shelter, killing six of their number.

The Prussians were erecting a battery here for 10-inch mortars, which at the time led us to believe that it had been determined to bombard Metz, which lay just under us. Subsequently, however, I heard on good authority that at no time had the Prussian generals any intention of doing this; and that all the many strong redoubts that were thrown up in so skilful a manner on all sides were for defensive purposes, as well as to give cover to troops opposing Bazaine's various attempts to escape.

As we passed through to the outside edge of the

wood, we noticed what a tremendous cleft in the ground the shell from the French fort had made. We lay down behind the parapet which had been thrown up on the outside of the wood, and thence made a good inspection of Metz with our glasses, every building of which from here was plainly visible. Towering high above all others stood the Cathedral, seemingly reposing with quiet confidence in the respect that would be shown to its sacred character. It was a noble object surely, and I never looked at it without feeling that my gaze was resting on an oasis of peace amidst a very desert of sorrow and trouble; so I often looked at it.

In the streets of the town there appeared much business of a military kind going on. At different points neatly formed camps were plainly visible; one more especially, a very large one to the right, and behind the Cathedral. Below us in a vineyard in the village of Jussy, about 1600 yards off, we saw a post of three Vosges riflemen. They were taking matters very quietly, and sitting down. Occasionally one would get up and lazily take a long shot at one of our sentries on the railroad.

Having thoroughly satisfied ourselves with our scrutiny, and moreover every one of those of the foreposts who could get away for a minute to have

a look through the Englishman's glass, we determined to seek out Lieutenant Gatung's detachment, which was somewhere in the neighbourhood. As we expected, we found that this gallant young lieutenant, while attending thoroughly to his military duties, had not neglected to see to his own comfort and the comfort of those officers who were fortunate enough to be in his detachment. We found him ensconced in a gravel-pit, which effectually hid from outside view a cheery fire, over which hung the indispensable *pot au feu.* As usual he had in his mouth his curved pipe, on his face he wore his customary bright smile of welcome, and on his feet a beautiful pair of embroidered slippers, which latter proved beyond a doubt that his pleasant face and honest character had gained for him far away other friendship than that of brother officers.

Nothing of interest occurred during the time we occupied the gravel-pit, beyond an occasional shell coming nearer than was quite pleasant; but they never hit off our particular little excavation, and so we enjoyed comfortably our *pot au feu.* We had not come to-day entirely empty-handed, but had brought a leg of mutton with us. This we knew had not been "hung," and consequently would prove very tough if cooked in any way other than stewing; and we had no time for that. So I shall here relate how we

cooked it, and let those who value a mouthful, which, although juicy, is sufficiently cooked, remember what I write. I cut a number of sticks from 2 to 2½ feet long, and sharpened them to a point at each end; then I cut slices half an inch thick from the joint, and fixing one end of the stick in the ground, so as to give it a slanting direction over the fire, on the other I impaled a piece of meat; each piece was but a mouthful, and by the time you had adjusted number 6, number 1 was ready to be eaten. I should state that I did not forget to rub each morsel well with salt and pepper before cooking it. At first we were well laughed at; but soon the bone of the leg alone remained, and every one was cooking in this novel fashion. My companion informed me that this was the common way of cooking in the backwoods; but as I hope that this book will fall into the hands of other than backwoodsmen, I trust that this simple lesson in cookery may be as novel as it is good.

Presently, after sundry German songs, we rolled ourselves in our coats; and, as far as I am concerned, I knew nothing more of the world until I was awakened by something extra hard under me towards morning, and found that destiny, not content with seeing me lying on a bed of what at any time is not downy—*i.e.*,

gravel—had made my revolver, which I had placed by my side to be ready in case of a night attack, shift under the small of my back. On the principle that to see a friend as uncomfortable as one's self is a great assistance to bearing discomfort, I took the speediest means in my power to wake up my companion. He demurred strongly at first, but on my reminding him that we had determined the night before to ride to Pont-au-Mousson,—and, moreover, finding that I did not intend to let him go to sleep again, he rose. It was only four o'clock, and we were unwilling to disturb any of the officers, who never got too much sleep at any time; so we climbed out of the gravel-pit with care lest we should rattle down some stones, untethered the old mare, and sped on our way to Gorze, intending to get a cup of coffee at the bivouac as we passed.

Arrived here, we found Oberst-Lieutenant von Henning already up, and a battalion preparing to relieve the one we had just left. When the Colonel became aware of our intention of going to Pont-au-Mousson, he, kind-hearted man, at once placed another horse at our disposal. I had intended to walk, but Pont-au-Mousson was quite twenty-five miles off, and this would have wasted much time, I therefore joyfully accepted the proposal.

We arrived at Gorze about eleven o'clock, and went straight to our lodgings to pack up certain effects and have a good meal before we started. My companion had gone to the butcher's to fetch some chops, when I heard a bell ringing in the street, and, looking out of the window, saw at once that it was rung by a crier. He was proclaiming that all arms and other things collected from the battle-field were to be at once given up to the commandant, and that death would be the immediate lot of those who failed to comply with the summons.

Now this proclamation was rather a bore, as I did not wish to give up the two chassepots and other trifling mementoes which I had secured the other day; and yet, if I left them here in my absence, and they were discovered, I should on my return infallibly find Jaquin hanging out of his window. Going to a joiner who lived next door, and who at that time had no lack of work, I got him to make me a box, placed therein all my relics, and left it with my address on it in my room, unconcealed from any one that might enter. I judged—and, as it turned out, rightly—that Prussian courtesy would prevent their opening a box which had an English gentleman's address upon it, whom they knew. So it happened that though, when we returned a day

or two after from Pont-au-Mousson, we found that the affrighted Jaquin, knowing what the box contained, had surrendered it to the commandant, and though we did not apply about it till some three weeks after, we found it had been sent to Germany with other *materiel*, with strict orders that it was not to be opened, but to be given up to me when I applied for it. The officials went so far in their civility as to give me a receipt, which acknowledged that they had sent the box away, and ordered that it was to be given up when required to the bearer.

My companion having returned after a successful forage, we sat down to a good meal of grilled chops and bread. In the middle of this came a heavy step on the stairs. Our door opened, and an officer entered, whom we saw by his uniform to be a doctor. We begged to know what he wanted, when he replied that he would be glad to make use of part of our room. We had not been accustomed to this sort of thing; and I explained that we were Englishmen regularly attached to the 8th Army Corps, and that we occupied this billet under the commandant's sanction. All this I said for fear of a precedent arising which might cause our being annoyed at other quarters in the future. Seeing, however, that the poor fellow

looked pale, I told him that we should be absent for two or three days, and that he was welcome to make use of the room during that time. He thanked us and sat down on a chair; he refused to eat anything. He looked very pale, and we could not make out what was the matter with him. Presently I noticed three or four great beads of perspiration on his forehead, then he suddenly rose and staggered towards the bed, but before he could reach it he fell to the ground with a cry, and convulsed, apparently, with agony. He had been attacked with cholera.

My comrade went out at once to seek a doctor, as he could speak German. In a minute the first attack had passed over, and, having undressed the sufferer, I lifted him into bed. He now shivered terribly, and seemed to be turning black in the face. I made him as warm as I could; and as soon as the surgeon had arrived, and we had finished our meal, we set out at one o'clock for Pagny, *en route* for Pont-au-Mousson.

CHAPTER XIV.

We soon reached Noveaut, a small town, of importance on account of its iron-works, to the south of Metz, on the Moselle. Here we saw groups standing about the streets talking in a way that indicated suppressed anger. One of their bourgeois had been caught in the—alas! too frequent—attempt to shoot an officer from behind a hedge. He had been hanged.

From this onward the ride was a real treat. I had not had any other mode of conveyance, save my own legs, until to-day; and the feeling of independence that sprang from having a horse under me made me unusually light-hearted. As may be seen by referring to the map given, our route lay up the beautiful valley of the Moselle. It was a peaceful, quiet scene for a while. No sound save the rushing of the river and the jog of the horses. On either side undulating but lofty hills, coloured with that lovely blue violet of which distance is the sole possessor, changing as it

gets nearer into the deep green of the oak-forest that clothes the hill-side, and yet lower down into the brighter green of the vines, from which peep forth many a rich cluster of purple fruit.

The railway at this point runs parallel to the road. Presently we came to a guard of Landwehr on it; they are there to see that the French peasant, who at this point has charge of a signal-box, plays no tricks. Then a patrol of *polizei* dash past us with some despatch of importance, nearly bucketing me into the ditch. So the temporary scene of quiet gradually changes as different reminders of war appear. Thus a long train of rattling field-artillery comes in sight, and effectually chases away any lingering forgetfulness of the unhappy state of the country that I had succeeded in conjuring up.

We passed Arnaville, the village at which we had turned off on the 17th from the Moselle with part of the 8th Army Corps as they marched to Gorze and Gravelotte; then we came to Arry, on the opposite side of the river. This, it will be remembered, was one of the crossing-points of the Prussian army. The last time we were here, there were some 30,000 men taking their mid-day halt, the last one that many of them ever had. There is the exact spot on which the four young officers were playing a

quiet rubber on the 17th; three of them were killed on the 18th. Here is where I succeeded in finding a ripe bunch of grapes, in exchange for a bit of bread and sausage from poor Major Rheinart; and one can almost see his footsteps in the mud where he stooped to bathe his face and hands in the river. He too is gone!

After this the next village was Pagny, and as it was peculiarly well situated, and I had an introduction to one of the citizens from a doctor at Gorze, we determined to stop here for the night. One of our reasons for this was to be able to form an estimate as to how French villages had been generally affected by the invasion, from this one we pitched upon haphazard. We inquired for the residence of the person to whom we had the introduction, and had pointed out to us a little house standing back from the others, with a cheery-looking garden in front. I dismounted and rapped at the door; but all was silent. Getting impatient, I gave the door a great rattle. An old woman appeared at an upper window, and denied that the house was the residence of the person to whom the note was addressed. She thought that we were emissaries of the Prussians, and had an ill-defined dread of something that we might do to her son. She must have been nearer eighty than

seventy years old. We could not reassure her, so we turned away to search for a lodging.

Pagny is a large village of perhaps 800 inhabitants. It had a look of great desolation. Its few shops were shut, and people were sitting on their door-steps, talking with a most un-French want of vivacity. They were sullen for the most part to us, not believing our assertion that we were English; and I did not regret that I had a horse under me and a good revolver at my side, which latter I took good care should be conspicuous.

Vexed at last at the unfriendly conduct of the villagers, I determined to rout up Monsieur le Maire, and, if necessary, obtain a lodging from him by right of my Prussian *erlaubniss*. I was directed to an excessively comfortable-looking house enclosed within high walls. I rang the bell, and forthwith a very pleasant and well-mannered fellow appeared at the gate, and asked us what he could do for us. On being informed that we were desirous of procuring lodging for the night, for which we would pay, he at once replied that if we would share his family meal he would gladly place a room at our disposal. We thanked him for his courtesy, and followed him through a garden full of choice plants into his house.

Ascending a handsome oak staircase, he ushered us into a beautifully-panelled room, having at one end a cupboard full of exquisite china; and we then had the pleasure of finding ourselves in the presence of a beautiful and pleasant-mannered woman, that essential element of civilisation from which we seemed to have been so long estranged.

This *was* a pleasant change indeed from the sulky villagers outside. Poor wretches! they had certainly enough to make them sulky. Monsieur le Maire informed us that everything in the village had been required in exchange for bonds—but then one could not eat bonds; and that he had scarcely enough food for himself and family, and consequently had often to turn from his door half-starving wayfarers, because any assistance that he could spare he must keep for his own villagers.

What will become of the inhabitants of this part of France, if we may take this village as a criterion for the others in the neighbourhood, in the winter, is hard to conjecture. Famine has not been much talked about; but I confess it is my belief that it must come in winter as surely as the sun must rise and set. I think I read in one of our journals something about a committee being formed for the relief of this class of distress; but I have watched for more

news about it, and have failed to find any. Let those good hearts who are so solicitous for the care and comfort of the men who have been wounded in their country's service spare a little of their money and their solicitude for the poor wretches whose sufferings will shortly not be the less because they are not caused by bits of ragged shell or smooth little bullets. The wounded in battle have many friends; but the sufferings of these poor creatures are forgotten among the more striking but not more pitiable ones of those who fight. I speak as one who has seen the effect produced by the advance-guard of the army of ills that has famine for its general. England can boast, if she will, with justice, that charity ranks foremost among her virtues; but one cannot help thinking of how much greater service that charity would prove if reason were a little more and impulse a little less perpetually associated with it.

Bread and a little soup *à la bonne femme* proved our meagre fare that night; for not only were supplies scarce, but I suddenly remembered, half-way through dinner, that it was Friday, and I then gave up all hopes of securing a more substantial course that evening. After dinner Monsieur le Maire's mother came in with his children. She was one of those old ladies that have so often been likened to old china, so thin

and fragile-looking was she. The children were very pretty; and the boy (a baby not quite two years old) amused us immensely by a trick that had been taught him. Whenever the word Prussian was mentioned, this child got into a most furious passion, and began striking out all round him to such good purpose that one feared to see his pretty china grandmamma, on whose lap he was sitting, chipped every moment.

At breakfast the next morning we found the village curé had been invited to meet us. He was not a benign-faced, white-haired old man, such an one as you may read of in Victor Hugo's works, but cunning and modern-looking, with a tonsure. His eyes were restless, but watchful. As soon as we were introduced, he began questioning us with great volubility as to the Prussian resources and dispositions. We hinted to him that anything we knew about the Prussian army we knew in confidence; but as he still persisted in the most barefaced attempts at pumping, my comrade, to whom as a military man he addressed most of his inquiries, at last expressed his surprise that one in his profession should tempt a man to commit a breach of faith. He made some shuffling excuse, and soon left the house.

Shortly after, a ring came to the entrance-door. It was one of the Juanita corps taking to the rear an un-

fortunate young officer who had had his skull fractured at Gravelotte, but who had escaped with life. They asked politely for some bread. Our good friend the mayor at once offered them a part of our breakfast, if they would share it, and helped the wounded man up-stairs as tenderly as if he had been his brother.

This poor young fellow was a sad sight. Life remained, but the lamp of sense that helps to make life's path bright was out for ever. His head was shorn and bound up; and he sat on his chair with a vacant look, having almost to be fed. He was fully six feet high. They were very hungry, and soon there was little left on the table. We then assisted the young officer down-stairs and on to the truss of straw in the cart that awaited him, and he then set out towards home, there at once to rejoice and shock the eyes of those that loved him.

Having bidden adieu to our excellent host, and exchanged many expressions of regard, we now hastened on to Pont-au-Mousson, promising to breakfast at Pagny the day after next. On our route to-day we passed through the familiar shade of hop gardens. They are grown here on much higher poles than in England, which seem to be formed into a permanent staging.

We had not neglected to provide ourselves at

Pagny with an introduction to an opulent townsman of Pont-au-Mousson, one Monsieur Fleuret. To him we repaired on our arrival about two o'clock; and though everything was barred and bolted at first, nothing could be more cordial than his reception of us when he found we were English.

He ushered us into a sort of library, and in exchange for the few little scraps of information that we felt justified in giving him, told us some highly exciting details of French victories that we had not heard of, and that have since turned out to be canards. It may be amusing to give some of them here. He told us how that yesterday Bazaine had tried to cut his way out of Metz on the extreme left, which was to the west from Pont-au-Mousson, and exactly the point at which I had slept with the outposts that night; that he had been repulsed, but that the Prussians had left 800 slain on the field. But the grand piece of news about which he assured me that the whole town was secretly rejoicing, was that M'Mahon, retreating before the Crown Prince, had marched through the vast woods in the neighbourhood of Toul, and, falling upon the besieging army of Prussians, had slain and captured 80,000 of them. This will show the state of ignorance as to the war in which even the better classes were in France.

Monsieur Fleuret assured us that the room in which we were sitting two days back had been the orderly-room and council-chamber of the King, Von Moltke, and Prince Frederick Charles. He gave us some hay and corn for our horses, both of which he assured us could hardly be bought for love or money; and we then returned to the Hotel de France, and were fortunate enough to secure a bedroom.

We had scarcely done so when there was a great commotion in front of the hotel, and four or five carriages drove up, with about ten or twelve dragoons for a guard: these latter I recognised by their bright blue tunics to be a detachment of the Oldenburg regiment. It was the Grand Duke and his staff. The latter seemed composed of three very stupid-looking majors and two doctors. It is a most curious thing to see how the grandees of the Prussian army always seem to carry about a contingent of doctors with them.

We knew at once that this powerful ally of Prussia would require the whole of the hotel for himself and his retinue, unless we thought of some strategem by which we could retain the room. We knew that the plea that it was previously engaged would be of no avail; so, as good luck would have it, I suddenly bethought me that the Grand Duke could hardly venture to turn

out a poor fellow ill with typhus or any similar disease; so I proposed to my companion that he should hasten up-stairs, jump into bed, and simulate sickness. This plan was quickly put into execution, and the staff occupied every other room in the house, the servants having for their resting-place what would have been our portion, the passage and stables.

When our room was secured to us—for it must be understood that our ruse was successful, as the two doctors on hearing that there was a man sick, probably with fever, did not, strange to say, offer their assistance—we descended to the coffee-room, and there met two very pleasant officers, who had just come from the rear to fill up some of the gaps made in the 34th Regiment by the late fighting. We had lunch, and then strolled out with them. They kindly introduced us at a sort of club which had been formed for the sole purpose of supplying the Prussian officers with beer. The proprietor was sent under escort once a-week to Nancy, where he obtained an excellent class of ale, and then retailed it to the officers and soldiers of the Prussian army; but to the inhabitants of the town he was not allowed to sell it, as it was a somewhat rare commodity.

I now sallied forth by myself into the street to observe what the town was like. It seemed to be

dirty in the extreme. In its centre was a large open square or place. Round two sides of this square ran a colonnade. The different streets in the town ran from this place as a common centre. Most of the shops were shut up, having sold out their goods, and not being able to get a fresh store of merchandise on account of Metz being blockaded. It may be a matter of surprise that they did not supply themselves from Nancy; but it must be remembered that the Prussians would allow no goods to travel by train, and carts and horses had all been put under requisition. I question very much whether this was not very short-sighted policy of the Prussian authorities; for, inasmuch as those who *had* got merchandise left, drove a splendid trade, and will consequently this winter be able to take care of themselves, it seems to me that it would have been advisable to have given others the opportunity of doing the same. By adding to the trains that ran between Pont-au-Mousson and Nancy twice a-day, a single van for the accommodation of the shopkeepers at the former town, the Prussian authorities might, I feel sure, have avoided much of the destitution that must ensue this winter.

As I turned into the principal street, I was delighted to see, opposite, a shop-window piled high

with cigar-boxes. I crossed the road and entered the shop. Imagine my astonishment when I found that the temporary proprietors were two offensive-looking German Jews, who had been permitted to bring four or five cases of cigars (each case containing 10,000) to this town, and to occupy the first shop that they found empty. This seemed to me very hard. These rich, oily, and bejewelled men, for whom there was no fear of hunger even in winter time, were permitted to bring their merchandise and increase their wealth in the very house that had been vacated by some poor wretch, because for want of means he could not keep it open.

My first impulse was to leave the shop without buying the precious luxury that I so much coveted; but then thinking that if the French bourgeois was aggrieved by the German Jew the French soldier should be benefited by him, I bought 20 boxes, containing 100 each, and costing from 2 to 3 thalers the 100, or from 6s. to 9s. I hear some one, as he sits in his club with a fragrant havanna between his teeth, groan as he reads the price of these cigars. I can assure him that I have smoked better cigars for 1d. or 2d. in Germany than I ever did for 4d. in London. These cigars were really tobacco, and they were in good condition. That they were thoroughly

appreciated by the Prussians themselves was clearly demonstrated by the way in which the shop was besieged, but these purchasers rarely gave more than 1 thaler per 100.

The thing that struck me most forcibly at this time was the utter absence of war prices. It seemed as if honesty held an absolute sway wherever one went. At our hotel there certainly was not much choice, and one got fed in great measure according to the place one occupied in the cook's affection. But still if one was not high up in that scale, and consequently got neither the large quantity nor the more delicate morsels which were both so acceptable to one after bivouacking for some time, neither did one get a long account. For myself I am bound to say that I fared remarkably well, and had to pay much under what I should have anticipated in time of peace. We heard German officers in the coffee-room complaining dreadfully about the quality of the wine. All I can say is, that my companion and I were served with burgundy that would have rejoiced the heart of the greatest *gourmet* in England. But then, as the old landlady remarked to me, with a knowing wink, "Ce n'est pas pour les Prussiens."

She was a wonderful old character, very strong-looking, but she could not walk, and was nearly eighty

years old. She sat all day in a chair at one end of the kitchen, peeling onions, or shredding the "haricots vert;" and, when this occupation failed her, she would crochet with wonderful rapidity. She was a grandmother; her daughter being a brown and comely woman, and mother of three very pretty, nicely-dressed girls. They were all very shy, but came round the old lady's chair, and listened with great interest to my descriptions of the battles of Gorze and Gravelotte.

It was now about nine o'clock P.M., and I was warned by the fizzing and crackling which was going on at the fire-place, that something good was preparing there for the Grand-Duke's supper. Having exacted from the cook a promise that she would keep a part of it for me, I went into the coffee-room, intending to secure a place before the staff should make their appearance, and hold it, when they did come, by right of possession; but they had taken the field before me, and I saw there was but one vacant seat left, and that among the thick of them. I felt that I could not be supposed to know that they were anything more than ordinary coffee-room visitors, as it was crowded day and night with German soldiers of some sort, so I pounced upon the seat. I was soon made aware, by the uncomfortable look of the two doctors who sat

opposite me, one on either side of the Duke's little son, and the ferocious look of one of the majors, that I had committed a grievous offence. Presently in came an officer, whose place it appears I had occupied, and, seeing this to be the case, I rose hastily to leave the table; but neither the Grand-Duke nor the new-comer would hear of my doing so, and, instead, we crowded together, and thus afforded room to the very big major who had just arrived.

The little son, who was dressed in a gorgeous uniform, looking about fifteen, and as if he could have rolled himself up and slept in his helmet, was the only person who seemed to be offended at my intrusion. Presently he turned to one of the doctors, and I overheard the words "Franzosischer spion" fall from him. The doctor immediately communicated gravely with the Duke, who, although intensely stupid-looking, was evidently good-natured. It seemed to take the latter some time before he could comprehend the nature of the doctor's communication; when he did, he burst out into a roar of laughter. The rest of the staff also laughed, though they could not have heard the joke; and the little prince got purple, apparently with anger. One of the majors, with whom I conversed afterwards in French, told me that the little Graf had suggested that I was a

spy, and had got very angry when laughed at by his father.

I sat up late, smoking my halfpenny cigars, and talking, till, one by one, the company dropped off; and I thought, when I discovered that it was one o'clock, that it was high time for me to follow. Lighting a candle, I passed into the yard from which I ascended the staircase. Though I could not see distinctly, owing to the gusty draft at this point that agitated the flame of the candle, I became aware of some one standing on the stairs two or three steps up. I shaded the light from the gust with my hand, and, as the flame steadied for a moment, I saw above me the youngest daughter of the house, who, I should think, was not more than fifteen. She had a Marie Antoinette pelisse over her shoulders, and I could see that she had been lately crying, and was wearied with sitting up. In spite of this she looked very pretty, and I hastened to ask her what was the matter. "Oh!" said she, "if Monsieur will only not be angry with me, but talk to me for a little five minutes. I have heard Monsieur tell about the battle of Gorze, and how he attended there a dying officer of the Garde Imperiale, and saw others dead. Here is a photograph of an officer of that regiment to whom I am *fiancéed* in secret. Do, I pray you, say if you

have seen him." And she clenched her poor little hands, and fresh tears came down her cheeks. Poor child! I took the photograph from her, and was glad to be able at once to tell that I had not seen him dead. She seemed happier at once, evidently ignorant of the terrible and disfiguring forms with which death is apt to be accompanied on a field of battle. I scolded her for stopping up in the cold, but she told me that she had been to bed once, but could not sleep, after hearing that I had been over the battle-field, until she had seen me; and so she had risen, and waited two hours for me here. I returned her the photograph, which she placed in a very cozy position, and we went upstairs, she threading her way on tiptoe over the heavily-snoring staff-servants who lay on the landing, and finally disappearing down a distant passage. I went with less care, and, as ill-luck would have it, trod upon the fat hand of a very fat domestic. The man started up with a roar, just as I managed to quietly shut myself into my room. Thus he did not perceive how he had received the injury; and I heard him wake his companions with many guttural oaths. They talked over it for a long time, and in the meanwhile I fell asleep.

I did not awake until a maid came into the room with two beautiful china-bowls of *café-au-lait* for us. Milk I had tasted just three weeks ago. The maid

brought us also a message from the cook, to say that if we wanted anything for breakfast we had better be in the coffee-room at a quarter to eleven o'clock, for the Duke and staff were going to breakfast at eleven. We did not, you may be sure, neglect this friendly notice, and were rewarded by a most delicious repast, the items of which I made a note of, and give here, to show that even in the eating way campaigning has its smooth points:—Fried trout, braised cutlets, stewed kidneys, potato chips, salad, cheese, grapes, and burgundy.

After breakfast, while smoking at the door of the hotel, I got into conversation with the adjutant of the staff, who informed me that Thiers was in power, and at the head of the French Ministry. This news, as you may imagine, caused great glee amongst all the officers, for even then they thought that this statesman would conclude a peace at any price.

A carriage now drove up, having a lady inside, whom I instantly recognised as Pauline Lucca. I had last seen her in "L'Africaine;" and immediately the remembrance brought with it the reflection of how different are the scenes through which we have to pass in this life. She was received with great courtesy by the staff; and after resting a short time in the coffee-room, started to seek her husband, who had been

wounded on the 16th at Gorze, and was lying, I think, at Ars-sur-Mosel. He was an officer in a Baden regiment.

As the weather was now getting very cold, I determined to sally forth, and see what I could purchase in the town in the way of warm clothing. I made sure that I should have to encounter exorbitant prices; but to my satisfaction I found that the French shopkeepers, in the most unaccountable way, neglected this splendid opportunity of making large profits. I purchased three very warm woollen jackets, the sort that in England bears the name "Cardigan" waistcoat, and which, if I remember right, first came into fashion during the Crimean war. For these I gave ten francs a-piece, and I would have given thirty if I had been asked, for cold is only second to hunger in its baneful influence in producing diarrhœa and dysentery. The Prussian officers were well aware of this fact; and though they could not always guard against hunger, frequently had long bands of flannel which they wound round their bodies and then tied with strings. For two flannel shirts I paid twenty-four francs, or not quite 10s. a-piece. I give these little details as instances of what I have just said above. I met with one exception to this rule. It was in the important matter of sugar. I searched every grocer's shop in the town

for this commodity without success. I was just leaving one of these shops when the good woman, finding that I was not Prussian, said that she had reserved one sugar-loaf for her own consumption, which I was welcome to if I liked to pay a large price. I took half of it at two and a half francs the pound. This was the only instance I remember of *kriegzcit* price.

I thought I would now visit the great café of the town, called the Café du Commerce. As I turned into the square, across which I had to walk, a long train of dirty-looking peasants in blouses entered at the opposite corner, escorted by some dozen Uhlans, and were marched up to the Hotel de Ville, where they were halted. I went up to inquire who were the composers of this motley column. I asked a native, who, with unwonted civility, growled and *sacrréd* at me, but did not answer my question. I then spoke to the non-commissioned officer in charge of the escort. He told me that these peasants formed a battalion of the Garde Mobile, and that they were eight hundred in number. They had been surprised while marching to Paris by two squadrons only of cavalry, and although fully armed with the *tabatière* rifle, had proved what very raw material they were composed of, to say the least of it, by throwing down their arms without firing a shot. The town's-people stood about this

body of men in angry groups, and looked as if they would like to tear them in pieces. A long rope, fastened to the outside wrist of each man, encircled the prisoners. Two carts followed filled with their arms. They were in charge of their full complement of officers of the line, who had done everything in their power to excite these cowardly troops to resist. For the sake of France it must be hoped that they proved no fair example of the branch of the force to which they belonged; otherwise she had better quickly make terms rather than change the mere stream of victory into an overwhelming tide of destruction, by attempting to stem it with so feeble a barrier.

Leaving these *fripons*, an epithet applied to them by one of the bystanders, I continued across the place and entered the Café du Commerce. I found it occupied by a totally different class of visitors to what I had expected. With few exceptions they were German students, all bearing the Geneva convention cross on their arm. These fellows, who were in the neighbourhood for the professed purpose of tending the sick, seemed to occupy the Café much more than the hospital, and to be much more ready at dealing out cards to themselves than comforts to the sick. I never entered this Café du Commerce without seeing from twenty to thirty of them with their attention

divided between billiards, dominoes, backgammon, and cards. It must not be supposed that amongst the students this conduct was invariable. There was a large minority of them who worked day and night without ceasing in a truly heroic manner.

The owner of the café was a perfect specimen of the Leicester Square or Panton Street café proprietor —dark, fat, and dirty, ready to cringe or to bully at a moment's notice as occasion required. He had laid in a good store of the commodities necessary to carry on his trade, and was making a fine fortune. Why did not the Prussian authorities require his cow or cows—for there was no lack of milk at his establishment—instead of exacting the last animal from comparatively poor country people? Such an incongruity stands out particularly, contrasted as it is with the usual admirable war-time administration of the Prussians.

While I was taking a cup of coffee here, the Prussian sergeants of the 33d Regiment came in, and, coming up to me, held out their hands and addressed me by name in very good English. They reminded me that one day on the march I had given them a drink out of my flask, and they now insisted on standing something in return. On asking them what brought them here, they replied that they

were in charge of recruits and volunteers for the regiment, and had just returned from Saarbrück. It was an easy matter, they said, to go to Saarbrück now; but the return journey was a different thing, owing to the immense number of heavy trains perpetually coming from there laden with supplies for the army. Thus it had taken but six hours to go and thirty-six to return. One of them told me that he was a merchant of Stettin; and he had quite the manners of a gentleman. His hands were white, and he wore a signet-ring on the little finger of his right hand. I told him that I had a box of goods for the regiment. He promised to call next morning and take it out with the recruits' baggage.

After supper, I spent the evening with the old landlady and her family of daughter and granddaughters. The latter played and sang nicely, and the youngest, I observed, was in good spirits. They told me of a pleasant English duke who had gained great popularity among them, from his nice looks and fluent powers of conversing in French, two days back. I could not for a long time make out the name that they wished to convey to me, but at last understood that they were trying to say Manchester; but their heavy accentuation of the last two syllables made the word unrecognisable at first.

They went on to say that the duke wore a neat uniform, like the Brunswick soldiers. I then assured them that he could not have been an English duke, as no one was permitted by our Government to carry an English uniform with either French or Prussian army. They all waxed warm over the argument, but failed to convince me. I have since found, however, that I was quite wrong in the statement as to the determination our Government had come to, as on my return to England I found that his Grace was at Pont-au-Mousson at about the date I speak, wearing a Yeomanry uniform, which, I have no doubt, he rightly calculated would contribute to the respect with which he was treated by the Prussians.

The next morning, the 29th, we woke up with a hard day's work before us. We had to ride back to camp, a distance of 30 kilometres (some eighteen English miles), as we could not keep the colonel's horse from him any longer. The sergeant did not come for our packs, and so we hired a trap and set out for home at two o'clock. We had managed to fish out of an old marine-store shop four odd spurs, and these immensely increased the going powers of our nags.

I must not take leave of Pont-au-Mousson without describing an admirable ambulance railway train that

has been organised by the inhabitants of Stuttgart, and which is to continue to run for the seat of war as long as the funds, which come from private sources, continue sufficient. I saw it at the Pont-au-Mousson station, waiting to take wounded or convalescents to the rear. It was composed of eight waggons in all, connected with one another in such a way that a passage ran all through the train. Waggon No. 1, next to the engine, was a kitchen; waggon No. 2 was a store-room in one half, the other half an apothecary's shop; the other six carriages formed the lazaretto or hospital. In these six carriages were eighty beds, so that there was no crowding. They were arranged with the head to the wall, as it were, and the feet to the passage which I have mentioned, on either side of it. Attached to the train was, of course, a regular staff of medical men and assistants, and also a staff of Sisters of Mercy. Of the excellent details that made up the whole of this perfect arrangement, perhaps the beds were the most worthy of remark. Some were suspended from the roof, others rested on the floor. The former were, to a certain extent, permanent, and were suspended in such a manner with india-rubber bands as to counteract the shaking of the train. They were intended for patients who, though obliged to recline, nevertheless did not

require to be lifted into the train. The latter were simply ordinary stretchers, on which those unfortunates who had lost a leg, or were otherwise injured so as to be crippled, could be carried in and out of the waggons at pleasure. I say they were ordinary stretchers — that is to say, they seemed so on a superficial glance; but, when you came to examine them, you found that they had a wonderful arrangement of springs, that suggested equality of comfort with an ordinary bed. With all these admirable arrangements it did not matter to the sick how long they were on their journey. In fact, as one of the surgeons remarked to me, as they went slowly, stopped often, and thus had the benefit of the perpetual change of air and scene, they were generally found to have gained strength at the end of the time. I have no doubt myself that the knowledge that the poor maimed fellows had that every puff of the engine took them nearer to that best of all medicines, the sympathy of those they loved, had something to do with the curative effect of the journey.

Our journey had nothing of interest in it to-day until we reached Noveant, if I except a pleasant luncheon at Pagny with Monsieur le Maire, to whom we gave a box of cigars. At Noveant we met, coming from Courcelles, the first sign of heavy artil-

lery we had seen — a train of brass 12-pounder rifled guns. We turned off to Gorze here, and presently came up with a train of Hessian artillery going to take up position before Metz. They had had a very bad march, having lost sixteen horses coming from Courcelles station that day. Courcelles is the nearest station towards Metz from the east which the Prussians have possession of; consequently all goods from the north of Germany come from Saarbrück by rail to Courcelles, and then have to be conveyed by waggon or other suitable means. It lies about twelve kilometres from Metz.

We arrived at Gorze at six o'clock, and after visiting Jaquin and taking a sip of cognac, we hastened on to the bivouac which we had left beyond Gravelotte. As we rode into this village a somewhat curious accident, and one that I never heard of before, happened to a young doctor of our acquaintance. He was a remarkably nice fellow, a good horseman, and well mounted. While talking to us, his horse standing still on the side of the road, which was "greasy" from the constant traffic, it slipped up without the slightest notice and fell on its side. Fortunately both escaped injury.

We were about to ride through the village when a well-known voice struck on our ears, and, turning

round, I saw Lieutenant Gatung, in his handsome slippers, standing on the doorsteps of a tiny little cottage, which had formed one of the hospitals for the wounded during the battle of the 18th. We rode up, and learned from him that the brigade had been relieved from outpost duty, and now formed the third or outer line of blockade round Metz at this point. Thus they had come to the rear, and, though the men were still unhoused, the headquarters of the regiment were fixed at this little building, the regiment bivouacking all around.

Orderly hussars now came up and took the horses, and we entered a passage having on each side of it a room. The one on our right was devoted to the officers of the 2d Battalion, the one on the left to the oberst-lieutenant, who, we were truly grieved to hear, was down with an attack of cholera. Each room was barely 12 feet square. The colonel sent for me at once. He was very glad to see me, poor man. He complained that he had been very lonely, for that, having lost all his majors, he had no companion. As he said, what is very true, he could not be too familiar with the junior officers. He was lying on some straw which had been placed on an old bedstead. A table, with a drawer which served for the top, that hav-

ing been knocked off, and a chair, formed the only other furniture. There was no one to nurse him but his honest and faithful servant Johann, a sturdy little German, who was his valet at home, and who by privilege had been allowed to follow him into whatever regiment he commanded.

I quickly produced one of the Cardigan waistcoats, and made the colonel put it on. After we had conversed a short time I went out to see what the other officers were about. I found four of them chatting and smoking their long pipes in the room opposite. Gatung handed me two letters, one from my wife, who was still in Belgium; the other from Ireland.

The remembrance of this always joyful event makes me desire to record my tribute of praise here to the admirable arrangements for the *feldpost*. As its name implies, it is the organisation which transmits all letters from the army, or those who are with the army, to the outside world. The letters go free of charge. At the town or village where the headquarters of an army corps are fixed, is first of all the bureau of what we should call the general post of the whole army corps. Each division of the corps has a branch bureau, placed at whatever is the most central position for the division. When an army corps is moved, the

board that has been hung outside the house to notify the "Post Office," and to which division of a corps it belonged, is unhooked, and at the end of the march suspended outside another house, according to where the headquarters are fixed. There was an arrangement by which soldiers could in a minute or two send a few lines to their friends in Germany, to inform them of their welfare or the reverse. It was a small coloured card, having on one side lines for the address, the other blank. On the address side was a short sentence stipulating certain conditions for the transit of these cards—one of which was, that the message should be written in German. There was no charge for letters, no stamp, or anything of the sort. In fact, the "field-post" corps formed as much a part of the army organisation as did the ambulance or *proviante colonne*. As an example of the excellence of its working, I may mention that, out of some two dozen letters written by me during my two months' sojourn with the Prussian Army of the Moselle, not one miscarried. They were longer going home always than coming out. I received also all letters that were written to me. They always took regularly five days to reach me, rarely more or less, and two letters from Killarney took no more than that time. It may

be interesting to the reader to observe the form of address.

A. B.
Oestpreuissischer Füsilier Regiment,
No. 33
29th Brigade,
15th Division
VIII. Armee Corps,
bei Gravelotte.

CHAPTER XV.

We found that during our absence the 3d and 1st Army Corps had been removed from the investment of Metz, and were to join the Crown Prince's army. This fact seemed to give a reliable aspect to the reports we had heard about the Crown Prince having received a check in the neighbourhood of Chaumont. Eventually it turned out that these corps were sent to reinforce the besieging-party at Toul.

We made a good supper that night off sardines, an immense box of which I had secured at Pont-au-Mousson. After supper, different officers dropped in, and we smoked and talked until the "batmen" cam "to make the bed." They commenced this operation by putting the two chairs and table into the passage outside the door. A soldier then entered with a huge truss of straw, which he arranged artistically round two sides of the room. I say artistically, with good reason. It is a matter of no small skill to make a good shake-

down of straw, which then becomes one of the most comfortable of mattresses. No fewer than nine of us lay down in that little room that night, and should have slept soundly had it not been for the loud snoring of our doctor, who perpetually woke us all up, and when woke up himself, would insist that it was all a mistake, as "he never snored," although all of us had been awake and sitting up throwing boots at him for the last five minutes.

Next morning early the table and chairs were replaced, and the straw was taken away preparatory to coffee and black bread, our morning meal, as soon as we were up. We had nothing else to eat until twelve, when breakfast came. I find by my notes that with me this latter meal, this morning, proved a strange contrast to the one I had enjoyed the previous morning at Pont-au-Mousson. It consisted of pea-soup, sardines, and curaçoa and brandy.

I found the colonel better, but very weak from want of nourishment. I had brought out with me some patent tapioca *bouillon*, and I determined to make some of this for him, with the assistance of my cooking apparatus. I had brought it by way of experiment, and was not prepared to find it so excellent. The tapioca grains are impregnated by some process with the strongest essence of meat.

They are then dried and packed in small boxes. A teaspoonful of this, seasoned with pepper and salt, I now found made, with half a pint of water, a pleasant and nutritious soup. I would recommend it to the notice of travellers.

This morning, for the first time since I joined, I felt the approach of diarrhœa; but with the assistance of fifteen drops of laudanum (a drug I always kept a good store of), and the breakfast I have above described, by two o'clock in the day I was quite restored. Not so with my companions, however; they were all ailing alarmingly, and the doctor was so ill that he had to go to hospital in the course of the day. I do not know what medical men say about the violent remedy of laudanum, but I know that in practice I found it a very *elixir vitæ* to many poor sufferers during the campaign; and I frequently administered it where it had been refused by the surgeon.

When the oberst-lieutenant heard to-day how crowded we had been last night, he was horrified, and insisted on our sleeping for the future in his room. He went so far in his hospitality as to insist that all three of us should there and then lie down, and try if by any means we could manage to enjoy the luxury of the bed; but as my companion, in

trying to take the outside place, fell down on to the floor, he was satisfied with the arrangement that we should take it in turn, to share the straw on the bed with him, one sleeping, as usual, on straw in the corner.

As we had not visited the outposts for some days, we thought a ride round would be interesting; and accordingly, at about three o'clock, we set out for them. When we came to the front, where I have described the Prussians as throwing up redoubts on the heights above Rozerieulles, we found a guard of the 13th Regiment. The officer told us that he had strict orders to let no one pass within sight of the works without a special order from the General of Division. We replied by showing Von Göben's signature; but the officer informed us that it was of no avail in this particular instance; that he knew we were attached to the 8th Army Corps, but that he had had to turn back an oberst-lieutenant that morning, so strict were his orders.

It was too late to ride back and get the permission now, so we rode northwards to inspect the foreposts in that direction. We found that they were very strong there; but that with the exception of lines of rifle-pits there were no field-works or redoubts for artillery. At this point, just above the village of Lessy,

we were due west of the dip that divides Plappeville from Mont St Quentin, only separated from it by the Bois de Saulny, and within easy range of the guns of these forts. Even thus early it was not hard to perceive that the weak point of the defence of Metz would be its want of ammunition: had its defenders had a good supply, they would never have let the Prussian foreposts in this neighbourhood lead such a quiet life.

A battalion of the 28th Regiment was on the foreposts at this point, and I had some interesting conversation with the officer in command of one of the detachments relative to the habits of the men on duty. They were allowed fires only three times during the twenty-four hours; they had cooked hot meat and bread brought them; they were allowed no water or potatoes, but as much red wine made hot as could be got for them. These supplies were of course sent from the bivouac of the regiment, which was generally a quarter of a mile to the rear, by a fatigue party.

While conversing with the officer, a corporal in charge of a patrol just coming off duty came up to give his report. He was in fatigue dress with a forage-cap, as were the three privates with him, and was all over mud, looking as though he had had a hard time of it during the last twenty-four hours. The duty of

these patrols was to visit certain foreposts, and make observations nearer than the latter, towards the enemy. It was consequently a post of danger, always intrusted to picked shots. As he came up he brought himself smartly to attention, and, with soldierlike monotony of intonation, reported, "The French have occupied Lessy, previously neither occupied by ourselves nor the enemy. While crossing the line yesterday, we were fired at by three Vosges Jägers. Seeing the puff of smoke from their rifles, we threw ourselves down, and the bullets passed over us. Our rifles would not carry to them, so they continued to fire at the long range, and we crawled away on our stomachs."

This is just an average specimen of a forepost patrol's report, and I give it to show what a necessary thing it is that our troops should be armed with a far-carrying rifle; and not merely a far-carrying one that would be valuable against large bodies of troops, but a weapon with which a soldier can make good practice at small objects at a distance of at least 1000 yards. I have heard officers in the English army say, it is useless to put a fine shooting rifle into the hands of our soldiers, as they cannot use it. And on expressing astonishment that such would be the case, they assign as the reason that everything in the way of musketry

instruction is made as irksome as possible to our soldiers.

Let those who have the regulation of our drill-books remember that victory in modern war, as inaugurated by the Prussians in 1866, and further demonstrated by them in 1870, is to the side who possesses the farthest-ranging artillery, and troops who can keep their heads while being shot at from a long distance, and who can return the fire with accuracy and nerve; not to the troops who can fire the best volleys, or who are most skilled at accurate field evolutions or file-firing. We have under the old system, in our army, two corps whose efficiency with the rifle is supposed commonly to supersede that of the soldiers in the ordinary line regiments. If this be so, it must be changed, and every soldier in our service must be brought to a state of the highest possible efficiency as a rifleman.

The time is gone when battles were decided by the troops who showed the greatest bravery and determination with the bayonet; with it has passed away, in great measure, the need for many of the drills that make alike the officer's and the soldier's life a burden to him. It must also be remembered that the impetuous and irresistible bravery our soldiers have so often shown in charging—and which has so often gone far to prove that our army is composed of the finest

troops in the world—unless directed by a different system, will prove in modern war a very weakness. The verb "to fight" bears a different signification to what it did fifteen years ago. So sure as the weapons we use, though made from the same material, must be of a different sort, and used by different rules, to those that served then—so sure is it that the courage of our soldiers, though it can but be manufactured from the good old British stock, must be of a different character, and controlled by different ideas. What we require for our army is quantity and quality. These two latter qualifications must be on a much nearer footing than they have been hitherto; quality is the most necessary of the two, but not so much so as it used to be. We require a large number of men trained sufficiently to prevent their being awkward to handle in the field, and all skilled and steady marksmen. These are the chief qualifications of the force that has just crushed an army composed of what may be termed the most regular troops in the world after our own—troops that were perpetually *sous le drapeau*.

The two things that we ought to learn from this war are—1st, That numbers tell more than they used to do, and that, consequently, a larger army is more necessary than formerly; 2d, That it is possible to

maintain such an army at a much less cost than formerly. When I saw a regiment at Gravelotte reduced to a third of its original strength, and in a fortnight's time saw that regiment, far away from its own country as it was, recruited to its full strength by efficiently trained soldiers, I wished that Mr Cardwell could have seen so striking a fact, as it might have aroused his apparently unwilling mind to the necessity of *quickly* remodelling our army, and taking a few hints from the Prussians.

It may be said that we English cannot be made amenable to the Prussian idea, that every man who has a stake in the country must fight for that stake. It may be that our traditions and customs make fighting for one's country, on offensive occasions, a matter of pay, and not also a matter of course; but surely for occasions of defence, after this war, we shall all claim to be made soldiers; and not only individually, but collectively: so that if the cloud threatens we may feel confidence, and if it breaks we may find ourselves not a set of francs-tireurs, or no more than excellent shots with rifles, but a vast, well-organised, and economical host—all of which conditions are perfectly compatible. In such a force there would never be wanting numbers of well-trained men willing to volunteer for the

reserve of our regular army, from which it might be recruited, and which then need never be called upon for purposes of home defence.

If we are not prepared to keep a large standing army, and yet expect that army to vindicate our honour on all occasions throughout our vast foreign possessions, we ought at least to be prepared to facilitate the performance of their onerous duty by taking from them the responsibility of the safe-keeping of our home possessions. At this time we as a nation are not so particularly popular, neither is the world so particularly honest—as demonstrated by the late secret *arrangement* of Messrs Benedetti and Bismark—that we can venture to congratulate ourselves on the fatness of our purses or the comfort of our homes—with the knowledge that haunts those amongst us who are honest enough to confess it, that we are too ill organised as to our defences to guard either. I wish that some one, of more authority than I, would exhort my brother civilians to say to the powers that be, "As you insist on reducing our regular army so as to render it useless for vindicating our rights of protest abroad, organise us at home, so that, if aggression prove the offspring of the contempt that has sprung up in the hearts of Continental rulers for us, owing to your administration, the aggressor may find that, as a nation, we can take

care of our honour at home, though you, as a party, failed to do so abroad."

Unwittingly I have been carried away from my narrative to discuss a point that must be prominent in the mind of every Englishman at the present time, no matter how incompetent he may be to cope with the question. My apology to the reader, if one is required, must be, that I would not let slip this opportunity of swelling, by my small contribution, the already overflowing list of protests against the helpless state we have been reduced to, and are kept in, by the present Government; and, having lived abroad for a year, dividing my visits pretty equally amongst four of the most powerful of Continental nations, I submit that I am not wholly unqualified to express an opinion as to the effect the large reductions made in our war department have had on our prestige as a first-class power among those nations.

While speaking on military subjects, I think I may venture to say something about what common-sense indicates must be the stamp of modern cavalry. Cavalry theorists will take up the point of the battle of Gorze, which commenced at Mars la Tour, for their base of operations, when they argue for the maintenance of that branch of the service in its pristine entirety; but this engagement was of such an excep-

tional character, and the result of it was so inexplicable, that a thoughtful man, cavalry soldier though he be, will look for a better example of the value of cavalry as a combative force in modern times before he argues for the retention of so costly a force without grave reforms. A fairer criterion as to the real value of cavalry in modern engagements would be furnished from the fatal charge of lancers witnessed by me at the battle of Gravelotte. They were simply doing what in days gone by would have been a brilliant, but not over-dangerous, exploit, and one that would have been of every-day occurrence; but though no more than this, it proved impracticable against modern fire-arms.

However, my object is not to discuss here what reductions, if any, are necessary in our cavalry; nor would a civilian be competent to do so, as this is not so much a matter of common-sense as of practical experience. But having seen much of that branch of the Prussian army during the war, and of its working, I will here suggest the class of accoutrements and soldier required for cavalry for modern warfare, and also the kind of duty which they will be required to perform. Both the man and his accoutrements should be as light as possible, consistent with strength. Let the limit height of a cavalry soldier be 5 feet 8

inches. The majority of men from 5 feet 4 to 5 feet 8 are far more capable of bearing fatigue than those from 5 feet 8 to 6 feet. As they will scarcely ever be required to act in very large bodies, the perfection of field evolution that has always marked our cavalry will cease to be of the same paramount importance, and will leave more opportunity for such instruction as will enable them speedily in small parties to tear up rails and destroy telegraph wires,—by no means so easy a thing as it sounds, and a subject that commands a special education among the Prussian Uhlans. They must be highly intelligent, ready to find their way through a strange country—far in advance of the main body of their army—with the assistance of maps; and a proportion ought to be skilled in sketching charts of the country they traverse, as a guide for the army which follows. It is owing to a force of this description that the Prussians have always been so well posted as to the whereabouts of the enemy, and it is to the want of such an organisation that is to be attributed the ignorance of the same on the part of the French.

They would rarely have to fight, as, being generally in small parties, it would be their duty to avoid encounters; but when they had, it would probably be at close quarters. For this purpose, a good revolver and

sword are all the weapons required. One important point I have forgotten to state; it is, that all Prussian Uhlans, or lancers, are taught to mine, so as to be able to blow up bridges; and they have a regular drill for the destruction of railways and telegraph wires, and have implements for both purposes belonging to each troop; I will close these few remarks on cavalry by questioning the policy which induces Government to reduce our force of Yeomanry. In case of invasion, there would be no lack of forepost and patrol duty for this small force; and I cannot help thinking that, amongst our lanes and in the close country, they would be of quite as much service as our finest regular regiments.

CHAPTER XVI.

On the 31st I find, by a reference to my diary, that I was awakened at two o'clock A.M. by cannon-firing from the direction of Metz. The oberst-lieutenant sat up, and my companion opened the window. The wind blew from the east, and as there was no alarm among the outposts on our side, we calculated, and rightly, that there was fighting going on to the east of Metz. The window was shut, deadening the sounds of strife, which were soon chased away altogether by returning sleep. At this time the Prussian works for hemming in the French were not completed, and we never lay down without being thoroughly prepared for a turn-out at any moment.

When day dawned we were glad to find the colonel quite recovered; and although he had not been out for many days, he insisted on parading his regiment this morning, and by seven o'clock had it all over. This early parade caused the officers to perform their

ablutions at a later period than usual, and consequently, instead of the not too large tin, I had to make shift with a saucepan to wash in.

This morning I had an opportunity of obtaining an official statement of the localities in which the army-corps guarding Metz were situated at this date. A glance at their distribution will show of how much greater importance the Prussians deemed the guarding of the north-west and west sides of Metz than the sides opposite. At Montois-la-Montagne, north-west of Metz, were the headquarters of the 9th Army Corps; at Marange, in the same direction, was the 10th Army Corps; to the west, at Gravelotte, was the 8th Army Corps; the 7th Army Corps was at Ars-sur-Moselle, and the surrounding villages, guarding the south-west; while on the opposite or eastern side there was only the 1st Army Corps and one division. Indeed, I do not see what purpose could have been gained at any time by Bazaine's making his escape to the east of Metz, even had he done so during the siege of Strasbourg, as he would immediately have been caught before he could have reached that city, and crushed by overwhelming forces; besides which, his base of operations would have been immediately cut off from him, and he would have been in a country that had been completely denuded of food by the enemy.

In the afternoon, for the first time since his illness, the colonel rode out, and invited us to ride with him. Having come to an arrangement with Jaquin about the old mare, I was provided with a horse, although not a very elegant one. The colonel found my companion another, and we set out for Ars-sur-Moselle, first paying a visit to Malmaison, and what was the French position at St Hubert, to which the colonel had not been since he led his regiment there on the 18th. From there we descended to Ars. We found it to be a moderate-sized manufacturing town, celebrated for some of the largest ironworks in France. The men usually employed in these factories were now all compelled to turn out and help to construct rifle-pits and earthworks.

Each town or village, as it was occupied by the Prussians, had appointed to it a military commandant, whose first duty it was to send for the mayor of the town. These latter were generally from quite the lower orders, and presented themselves usually in a blouse, but invariably with the tricoloured sash round their waists, which seemed to be a sort of badge of office. The commandant then told the mayor that a certain number of men (according to the size of the town, generally 100 from Ars, sometimes 300) would be required each morning as a labouring party for the

trenches, or rather rifle-pits, and redoubts; that he (the mayor) would be held personally responsible for their production; and it is surprising how rarely Monsieur le Maire incurred punishment. The commandant was from day to day supplied with a statement of the amount of corn, hay, straw, &c., required by the troops in the neighbourhood of his jurisdiction; and he made the mayor responsible for the production of these also, using his judgment as to whether the mayor's statement as to there being no more were true or the reverse, and giving receipts for all that he received.

We found all the shops, with the exception of the butchers, shut. There were a few cafés open, and up to the principal one, the Lion d'Or, we rode. Having breakfasted this morning somewhat meagrely on sausage and brandy-and-water, we were not sorry to find that we could obtain here a veal cutlet and some potatoes; nor did we enjoy them the less because we had to eat them on a billiard-table, in a room dusky with tobacco-smoke, and resounding with guttural noise.

As the colonel never knew at what moment he might receive orders to march, he had to hasten back to quarters. I secured a bag of oats for my "Rosinante," containing about three feeds; for this I

paid five francs, which I confess I thought a very moderate charge, considering the time.

Our evening was made happy by the arrival of a letter from Major von Gilsa of the 2d Battalion, who was at Saarbrück, as he had not sufficiently recovered from his wounds to return to Fatherland before again joining his regiment. In it he related the following curious anecdote. I should explain first that my companion had left behind him at Bas Beux, when we hurried on to Gorze, a handsome clasp-knife, and imagined that it was lost. As far as I can remember, the major said, "Your knife which you left behind at Bas Beux I placed in my pocket, intending to give it to you; but as I never saw you before the fatal 18th, it remained where I had placed it. The bullet which would undoubtedly otherwise have taken my life struck it, and was turned from my groin to my thigh." These occurrences are not exactly rare, but they are sufficiently uncommon to make the narration of them interesting when one is sure of the source from which they come.

On awaking the next morning, the 1st of September, we again heard sounds of heavy cannonading in the east, so determined to visit the general of brigade, and obtain a special permit from him to go to the Prussian works on this side of Metz, which would bring us to the point nearest the fighting without compelling us

to go nine or ten miles round to the east. Many of the officers regretted much not being able to accompany us, but they were ordered to hold themselves in readiness to-day to move at a moment's notice.

On presenting ourselves to the brigadier, he immediately asked if we were officers. I replied that my companion was, but that I had the misfortune of not being one. He then made strong objections—fearing, I suppose, that I might be indiscreet; but on my companion guaranteeing my good behaviour, the *erlaubniss* was granted, and we had the satisfaction of knowing that we were permitted to view what was denied to a good many Prussians, and absolutely to all civilians.

In the map which accompanies this book, I have endeavoured to explain the positions of the most important of the Prussian earthworks. The map is an official one, much used by the German officers, and the only good one that I have seen. Here it is enlarged by the camera process, and I trust may serve to simplify some of my explanations. I have given on it a plan of the battle of the 16th August, as there seems to be some doubt as to the proper name of that battle. It will be seen by the map that the French centre rested on Rezonville, the Prussian centre on Gorze. I have decided, therefore, to name this fight

after one or other of these villages; and as Gorze is much the larger of the two, and the plateau on which most of the fighting took place is situated on the heights just above it, I think that the legitimate name is obvious. Some people have called this the battle of Mars la Tour, but a glance at the chart will show that the fight at that point was confined entirely to the van of the two armies and to cavalry, the artillery or infantry not being up until much later in the day, and attacking the French line at Rezonville.

But to return to our walk. Wending our way through the rifle-trenches, which all round this neighbourhood had been perfected since we were last here, we came to the 12-pounder battery, to the right of the road leading to Rozerieulles. It was finished, composed entirely of earth, without fascines or sand-bags. Mounted on it were six handsome brass guns, pointing towards St Quentin. They were all covered with branches, to prevent the sun shining on them and indicating their whereabouts. Close to this was a redoubt for a battery of small field-guns to sweep the valley towards Metz in case of a sortie from that side. From here we could see splendidly the fight that was going on to the north and north-east of Metz. It was the end of the battle that we witnessed—by far the most important sortie made

by Bazaine during the time that he was incarcerated in Metz, and I think may be most appropriately termed the battle of St Julien. From what the foreposts told us, it appeared that the fighting had commenced at two or three o'clock on the preceding morning. This account agrees with what I wrote a short time back in my narrative, that at Gravelotte we were awakened about that time by cannonading in the direction of Metz. At the time of which I write it was about eleven o'clock A.M., so that the fight had raged, with but little intermission, for thirty-two hours.

I will give here an account of the part of the engagement that I did not witness, which took place on the 31st, as narrated to me by a wounded French officer. I have before stated that on the eastern side of Metz the Prussian defences were very weak compared with those on the west, and it was therefore that the French sortie on the 31st was completely successful.

The first cannon was fired from Fort St Julien at two A.M. It appears from the officer's account that the chief points of attack by the French were the towns of Malroy, Charly, and St Barbe. At Malroy the Prussians had constructed a camp, and partially fortified it; besides which, it was one of their chief points of communication with the left bank of the

Moselle to the north. To become masters of these three points it was necessary first to carry the villages of Villers l'Orme and Vany, which were held by Prussian outposts covering Malroy and Charly; and Nouilly, Servigny, and Noisseville, covering in like manner St Barbe. The 6th Army Corps, under Marshal Canrobert, was directed against the Prussian right, and carried the village of Vany by assault. This corps was backed up by the 4th, which took Villers l'Orme in like manner, and was so situated as to be either able to support Canrobert on its left, or the 3d Army Corps, commanded by Marshal Lebœuf, directed against St Barbe, on the right. The latter corps, in its progress, stormed splendidly the villages of Noisseville and Sevigny, both of which, the officer told me, had been fortified by the Prussians.

Nothing could have been more admirably situated for escape, one would have thought. The French army consisted of four corps. On the left, protected by the Moselle and the big guns of Mont St Quentin and Plappeville on the opposite side, was Canrobert with the 6th Corps; in the centre was the 4th Corps; and on the right the 3d Corps, commanded by Marshal Lebœuf. You will probably say that this position rendered their right liable to be taken in flank at any moment by Prussian reinforcements

coming up from the south. To guard against this the 2d Army Corps was held in reserve at and about the village of Borny.

We see that the French on this occasion made use of nearly all the troops at their disposal; and as I have not made out that on the Prussian side there were more than two army corps and one division in action, on this occasion it is evident that the French had numerical strength on their side. There is no doubt that, as far as increasing their lines, and progressing towards freedom, the French on the 31st August gained all the ground that they could have expected in the time that they had to do it in. Thus when darkness made artillery useless, and firing ceased, they found themselves in a fine position for carrying the main points, St Barbe and Malroy, by night assault. Now questionable generalship came into play. Bazaine seems to have been contented with the progress made by his troops, and instead of a night assault along the whole line, he ordered a rest.

I have not myself the slightest doubt that, but for this inaction, Bazaine would have found himself and the greater part of his troops beyond the Prussian lines in the morning. I do not believe that any advantage would have accrued to him, as, once out in the open with no baggage, in a famished country,

his entire army would have soon fallen an easy prey to the combined Prussian corps, which would have been massed and on his heels long before he could have even reached Thionville. I cannot help thinking that the Marshal and more thoughtful of the French leaders of the army of Metz must have considered this, and remembered that it was better to make sure of detaining 200,000 of the enemy around Metz than to escape only to be annihilated by them. If Marshal Bazaine did not entertain this opinion, it is hard to account for his inactivity after his successes on the 31st. Be that as it may, this inactivity forms the basis of one of the charges of disloyalty to his country now brought against him. I leave the reader to settle in his mind as to which course he considers would have been dictated by the greatest amount of loyalty and prudence combined.

The Prussians, having recovered themselves somewhat after the hard day's fighting, and possibly being reinforced, attacked the French at ten o'clock on the morning of the 1st on the ground that the latter had lately gained, and quickly retook their lost positions. The French foreposts, it appears, were caught napping; and it was at the moment when the French, as yet not in full retreat, were trying to remedy the evil with fiend-like fighting, that we came upon the scene at eleven

o'clock. The Prussians had established one, if not two batteries of artillery outside the Bois de Charly. These had set the village of St Julien in flames. We saw smoke, too, ascending from several other villages; and with it came up that awful roar of destruction that is so hard to imagine or describe—Mont St Quentin thundering out, and sending its destructive missiles over Metz to the enemy, and looking as though, were it not fixed, it would roll over and crush its insect-like assailants.

It was a wonderful *coup d'œil*. Suddenly, while watching one of the villages that had been retaken by the Prussians—I think it must have been Nouilly—and from which a column of dusky smoke was rising, I saw the white cloud from a shell close to the church spire, and the next moment the spire had disappeared into the vast bonfire formed by the village below it.

We had advanced to the Prussian rifle-pits almost overhanging St Ruffine and Rozerieulles, and from this position watched the course of the fight. It was quite clear, even at this distance, that the French were gaining no ground. The battery in front of Charly seemed to do them great harm. Every now and then the French foreposts on this side would pay us the compliment of sending a chassepot bullet, which either went singing over our heads, or buried itself in the earthwork

protections. The Prussian foreposts were doubled here, and it was amusing to watch the perfect indifference with which they treated these bullets, remarking, if one happened to strike the iron piece of sheeting that at this point was placed to enable them to stand up in safety, "Donnerwetter! aber der chassepot ist ein recht gutes gewehr!"—the French being out of range of their needle-guns.

Let us look out once more in the direction of St Julien. The fire seems slacker than it was an hour ago. Listen—the French are once more defeated—the retreat is being sounded along the whole line. How distinctly we can hear their drums and trumpets, in spite of the confusion of other sounds.

I looked at my watch, and found it was precisely half-past twelve o'clock. In a quarter of an hour not a shot was to be heard, save an angry growl occasionally from the big fort, as though he dared the enemy to pursue; and at this distance we could see nothing to remind us of the late scene of carnage that had been enacted, save a curtain-like cloud which still hung over the fields, festooned, as it were, on four dark pillars of smoke, each having for its base a smouldering village.

We now pulled out some of the eternal *wurst* and *schwarzes brod* that we had brought with us by way of luncheon. The reader will not be surprised when I tell

him that I failed to consider this a very complete meal, and that consequently I wished to make it more so. The only way I could see of doing this was by procuring some nearly ripe and very luscious-looking grapes that appeared in a vineyard about thirty yards on the other side of the rifle-pits, or rather trenches. The only question was, as to whether or no the French foreposts would distinguish me sufficiently from a Prussian not to shoot at me. I did not stop to consider the point, but sprang over the trench and bolted into the vines, amid many *Ach Gots* and *Donnerwetters* from two young engineer officers who were complacently smoking their long pipes behind the little work. I returned in a couple of minutes with an armful of fairly ripe grapes, unscathed myself, but I am afraid the cause of a severe wound to one of the sentries. This poor fellow, amused at watching me, had not paid the usual attention to the French foreposts, and had exposed himself. As I topped the bank about fifteen yards from where he was standing, half covered by the iron protection, I saw the honest grin on his face suddenly disappear, and with a cry of pain he dropped his rifle, placing his right hand on his left elbow. We had heard no shot, but a bullet had quietly performed a long journey, and shattered this poor fellow's elbow.

Usually these sentries had plenty of time to avoid the ball, by lying down or retiring behind the iron after they saw the puff of the rifle; and as they generally knew the whereabouts of the French advanced posts, there were very few casualties among our foreposts from the chassepot. The shells did much more destruction. The poor fellow was immediately replaced, and the regimental doctor sent for, who arranged his wound, which was a bad one, the elbow being smashed.

Time fled but slowly. My comrade made a sketch. I looked through the engineer's telescope, a large brass one fixed on a stand, with which you could almost see the time by the Metz Cathedral clock; then I fell fast asleep in the trench, and forgot everything.

I was awakened by hearing myself called Mr Vinn by a well-known voice, and opening my eyes I saw the dear old Colonel von Henning on his white horse, and with him the General of our division, the 15th, and his aide-de-camp, the three together making a sort of semi-circle round me, and all laughing heartily at having caught me asleep, on "forepost duty," as they expressed it. They had ridden up here to examine the ground for our brigade, which was to be sent forward from Gravelotte; every division, in fact, was to make a move round eastward. This move was a counter one to a move made by the French forces in Metz threat-

ening a sortie on the south-east of the town. Two battalions of the 33d were to bivouac on these heights; the third was to occupy the village of Vaux, where our headquarters would be situated. We inquired what had become of our luggage, and the colonel told us that it had been packed up in our absence by the regimental servants in his private waggon, and was waiting outside the wood until a road had been discovered down through the wood to the village, as otherwise it would have to go round by Ars-sur-Moselle.

When rambling in the woods not long before, I remembered having come across a timber-track, which I thought would do; so I volunteered to escort the waggon. The colonel advised us to wait for those who were searching the wood, so that we might form a stronger guard; but not knowing then, what I heard afterwards, that both the Bois des Ognons and that of Vaux abounded with francs-tireurs, I persuaded the colonel to let me have my way, and we set out in the direction he indicated. We soon found the waggon. The three soldier-servants were lying on the ground, quietly smoking; the horse was grazing to his satisfaction on clover, a field of which ran up to the skirts of the wood. As we came up, the servants sprang to their feet; and when my companion

told them why we had come, they prepared with alacrity to follow us.

Skirting the edge of the wood for about half a mile, I presently recognised a slight break in the trees, and forcing the old mare through some brushwood, found myself in the track. We soon cleared away the brushwood, and began to wend our way, as quickly as disproportionate ruts would allow the wheels of the cart to go, slightly downwards in a south-easterly direction. Johann, the colonel's little valet, now most practically betrayed to what class he belonged. Having let us get well into the wood, so that to return would cause us to be for ever laughed at, he said in solemn tones to my companion that he would bet we should fall into an ambush, as several of the men had been fired at lately while cutting boughs in this wood. We laughed at the idea; but I felt far from comfortable, as if anything happened to the colonel's baggage I should be clearly responsible; so I made the men load.

Another danger now presented itself. We had been going eastward for a considerable time, and I feared that when we came to the egress of the road we should find ourselves close in upon the French advanced posts. For though I knew that this track led in the direction of Vaux, I did not know exactly

where it had its egress, and the latter village was no more than 1000 yards from Jussey, which I knew was perpetually occupied by the Vosges tireurs.

Presently we saw a break in the wood ahead, and I knew that we had reached the edge in that direction. Now to find out what "that direction" meant. We called a halt, and dismounting from "Rosinante," I walked forward to the opening. Peering from behind a large pine-tree, I found that my fears to a great extent were realised. The track ran to the edge of the wood at this point, which was as near as possible half-way between the villages of Vaux on our right and Jussey on our left. Skirting the wood for about sixty yards, it again buried itself among the trees in the direction of the former. Thus for sixty yards we must be exposed to the fire of the French foreposts, whom we could see as usual, though we had never seen them so close before. Two were quietly sitting in the corner of a churchyard, the other on the look-out, with his shining rifle resting on the wall. At the furthest they were not more than 500 yards distant.

Our men were for firing at them, and I have not the slightest doubt that their three needle-guns at this distance could have done good execution, as up to 700 yards they are very accurate. But I would be no party to an aggressive movement; besides which, we could

not tell how near the French might be in force, who might turn out and capture us before we could reach the Prussian lines. So we did not entertain this idea for a moment; and as the men were implicitly obedient, we determined on the following course of action. The men and my companion were to place the waggon between themselves and the Frenchmen, and, trusting to good luck to shield the horse, were to hasten as quickly as possible across the gap. To myself there was no danger, as "Rosinante" for that distance could "stay" in such a gallop as would puzzle the best "running-deer" shot we have in England.

"Vorwärts!" says my companion, and out they go into the open. The men are very short, and perhaps the tips of their helmets even will be hidden by the waggon. Why did I not make them put on their forage-caps? Ping goes something over their heads. I turn round to the tireurs; sure enough they are all on their feet, and evidently determined to give the horse and cart a benefit. (I was waiting behind the tree until they should have passed in safety.) I can still hear the bullets whistling and pinging away, but they mostly go high. How mad those Frenchmen are getting as they see the waggon nearer and nearer safety. With my opera-glass I was behaving all this while as though I were at Wimbledon watching the effect of

the shots on a target. There! by Jove, one has struck the waggon. That is their last chance. Now it is my turn. When the waggon had passed safely across, it was for me to afford a little amusement. Throwing myself spahi fashion round one side of the mare, and clinging manfully to her neck, I set the old lady in motion, and came into the open, and safely through it, at a very considerable pace. This was the third occasion only on which I had seen German soldiers laugh heartily — the first being when I saw some of them reading a French account of the battle of Saarbrück.

Another quarter of a mile brought us to Vaux; and on inquiring of a *feldwebel* of the second battalion, which had arrived, where the colonel's headquarters were fixed, we were pointed out a chateau of considerable size, standing in a courtyard in the middle of the village.

My custom on entering a new village was always at once to see about rendering myself and companion independent, if possible, of the officers in the matter of eating and sleeping. So having delivered the waggon over to the adjutant, Lieutenant Homburg, who was standing on the steps awaiting our arrival, I turned down the hill to see if I could discover anything in the way of a hostelry. I saw one,

and entered. Pushing open a door on the left hand, I found myself soon in the presence of the usual querulous old woman who generally formed the presiding deity of these village cabarets. "No—I have nothing," she replied to my query; "you have eaten everything; only my little cat is left to me;"—and so on, I am sure, it would have been for an hour, had I not saved her telling more untruths by informing her at once that I was an Englishman, and no enemy to the French. Instantly "she had just a little taste of milk for monsieur, two or three eggs, and some bacon; but monsieur would not tell, as a little cow and three little hens were all that she had left, and they were kept in a little cellar. There was one little room which monsieur should have got ready for his friend and himself."

I found from this conglomeration of statements that I had tumbled, allegorically speaking, into a very nice field of clover. In spite of there only being very "little" of the different luxuries, I knew by experience that that statement referred to the amounts when applied to the mouths of a Prussian army, and not to two inoffensive Englishmen. So securing a "little" bottle of milk from the "little" cow for my friends at the chateau (they had not tasted milk since we had left Saarbrück), with many

mutual expressions of regard I left the old lady to prepare the bedroom, chalking on the door, before I went, a notice to the effect that I was attached to the 29th brigade officially, lest it should be put in requisition during my absence.

To enter the chateau, you had either to pass through a tunnel up-hill under the house, which brought you out into the garden and on a level with the apartments, or you ascended a flight of stone steps from the quadrangle into a balcony of marble, from which right and left doors opened into the house. All the apartments were on a flat, well proportioned, and with beautiful polished chestnut-wood floors.

The owner had escaped (?) to Metz; but his old servant Joseph, of whom I must give an accurate description, volunteered to stay behind to take as much care as was possible of his master's property.

I ascended the steps, and met Joseph on the top. He addressed me, saying, "Welcome, monsieur; I am glad to see you here. Monsieur is a friend of the Englishman who has been here, and who fought with my master in the Crimea?" He went on to say that he, too, had fought in the Crimean war; and, as he expressed it, pointing to the wooden stick that supplied the place of his left leg, "I have the honour to carry for my master one of his wounds, as I was

standing in front of him when my leg was carried away."

He was a very big man, with a face at once rough, handsome, and kind, and busied himself all day, in spite of the inconvenience caused to him by the loss of his leg, making the best of a bad job, and himself pleasant to all, combining the duties of cook, housemaid, valet, butler, and cellarman. In this latter character he now appeared. "Follow me, sir," he said, leading the way through the kitchen to a door which externally had the appearance of belonging to a plate-closet. He opened it with a key, and disclosed a snug little apartment beyond, the appearance of which I can best indicate by describing it as a "housekeeper's" room. He said, as he discovered it, half apologetically, "I have given almost every room to the Prussians, as well as everything else 'à la guerre comme à la guerre.' They have won, and are gentle conquerors, but I try to take care of some of my master's best wine, a bottle of which I know you would be welcome to." With that he pulled forward the board that blocked up the fireplace in summer, and exposed a number of bottles of wine neatly packed away as though they were in a bin. I forgot to mention that the first thing I noticed on entering was my companion sitting in a comfortable arm-chair, and smok-

ing a very English-looking pipe of the churchwarden order. Joseph pulled from the fire-place a bottle, which proved to contain the finest Chateau Y Quem it has ever been my lot to taste, and for half an hour we sat and chatted pleasantly enough, but failed completely in our endeavour to make Joseph drink a single glass of his absent master's wine. It was a pleasure to talk to him, so utterly devoid was he of the disgusting swagger that so often belongs to Frenchmen, no matter how much reason there be for an opposite demeanour. Napoleon said of the English at Waterloo, "They never know when they are beaten." What would he say of his own countrymen now, could he but see them? The same words, I think; but with how different a feeling! Indeed, like words can bear very opposite interpretations.

We have finished the bottle of Y Quem, and must go to pay our respects to the colonel, leaving Joseph to cook the dinner. Lieutenant Homburg had apportioned us a room by the colonel's orders; but we told him that we were well supplied down in the village; so an officer who had not slept once out of bivouac since we left Saarbrück was enabled to occupy it. Dinner passed off satisfactorily, except for the execrable wine—for we did not, of course, betray Joseph's secret—and at ten o'clock I found myself in bed at the

auberge, reading an account of the execution of Louis XVI. and the luckless Marie Antoinette, for offences against the people—and thinking to myself how much more worthy were the Duc de Grammont, Monsieur Emile Olivier, and Marechal Lebœuf, of the guillotine. For surely their offence against the people is both great and well-defined.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE first news that greeted us on the following morning, the 2d of September, when we went to breakfast at the Chateau, was that, in the night, the French had moved back, and that consequently we had to do the same. Each division was to return to its old quarters —we, the 15th Division, to Gravelotte, the 16th here, and so on. Imagine the vexation that this caused amongst our fellows. The "book" soldier never minds what he does, or what he has to do—it is all duty with him; but my experience of the real soldier is that, though in the performance of it he is not rivalled by his traditionary self, yet he does grumble, "rather," at a disagreeable duty such as this undoubtedly was. The courtyard re-echoed with "donnerings," "wetterings," and "blitzenings;" more than these portentous significations of German wrath I fortunately did not understand.

Our two battalions, on the heights between us and

Rozerieulles, were already back at their old position in Gravelotte. The battalion here was not to march until to-morrow morning at five o'clock, and we determined not to relinquish the quarters we had so fortunately hit upon in the village, but to occupy them as long as any milk or eggs were left, or until we were turned out, which was just possible might happen, as we were not much known to the 16th Division.

After breakfast the colonel sent for the mayor of the town, and told him that he was at once to find sixty men to work in the rifle-pits. We acted the part of interpreters, my companion doing the hardest part, as he spoke German fluently, as well as French. Then the band was ordered to play in the courtyard; and, lighting our pipes, we sat out in the balcony to enjoy the music. We had not been thus long, when our general of division rode up. He informed us that he had been deputed to hold an interview with one of Marshal Bazaine's staff, who was to meet him here at eleven o'clock. Our powers of talking French were again called into requisition, the general asking us to interpret for him; for although both he and his adjutant could speak good English, they did not understand much French. We resumed our seats, and waited the arrival of the enemy's emissary.

Presently we heard the sound of a clarion echoing through the village, and we knew at once that it came from no Prussian horn. A hussar orderly threw the gates open, and a Chef d'Escadron rode into the courtyard, preceded by a trumpeter of Cuirassiers, carrying a white flag. We all rose, and the French officer, descending from his horse, proceeded to mount the steps. There was not that amount of courtesy displayed to him that I should have expected to see, and I felt keenly for the poor fellow, as, with a respectful but dignified and self-possessed air, he passed through the group of officers. We followed him into the saloon, and, taking a chair, he began his sad request, addressing himself to us, my companion translating into German for the General.

It appeared from his statement that typhus was raging in Metz, and that the medical staff was wholly inadequate, numerically speaking, to attend on the sufferers. He begged therefore that an ambulance corps might be sent into Metz sufficient to attend upon the German wounded, and those who were sick of the typhus.

He made his request with much gentle dignity, but with the air of one who thought his demand was certain to be complied with, and I confess it was with no small amount of sorrow that we had to con-

vey to him a refusal. I shall never forget the poor fellow's face. Haggard and hungry as he looked when he came in, one would have thought it impossible for him to have had a more unhappy appearance; but now the expression of hope fled from his countenance, and my anxiety was aroused by the quivering of his mustache as a bitter word flew up from his heart and shook his lip in its endeavour to break forth. He arose, and, expressing his regret with dignity, reminded the General, with a slight irony, that when the Prussians, after Gravelotte, sent to Metz for a French ambulance to attend to the French wounded, a well-appointed one was at once at their disposal. The General, who I knew to be a thoroughly kind-hearted man, said that, as merely a General of Division, he had no authority; but the French officer suggested, "You are deputed from headquarters to see me; refer the matter to headquarters." Why, I could never make out, but this did not seem to suit the Prussian views. So the aide-de-camp, I am sure with a very heavy heart, coldly saluting the officers present, and shaking us warmly by the hands, turned to go. We poured out for him a large bumper of wine, which the poor fellow drank thirstily enough, and then went with him to his horse. "Mes amis," said he, bitterly, as he turned his horse's head,

"si les Anglais fussent nos enemis peut-être nous aurions reçu une autre réponse."

I do not know what reasons the Prussians had for this apparently harsh conduct, and so do not attempt to criticise it.

Nothing of interest occurred during the rest of the day. I dawdled about the lawn, and fished for the carp in the pond, which was surrounded by pretty acacia and willow trees. Then I strolled up to the top of the kitchen-garden, and spent the rest of the day at the outpost, which was stationed under protection of the wall, and was the nearest on this side towards Metz. Joseph to-day provided us with a *recherché* little dinner in his sanctum, as we did not care to intrude on the officers of the brigade of the 16th Division, who had arrived here.

At half-past four next morning I was awakened by the solid tramp of our battalion wending its way back to Gravelotte. In spite of my love of soldiering, and of my having shared their early hours and cold nights for a fortnight, without once feeling inconvenienced—when, from my warm bed, I heard the sound above alluded to, how I did thank my stars that I was not a companion in arms! Turning over, I went to sleep again, and was not disturbed until my good hostess brought me in a steaming bowl of *café-au-lait* at eight o'clock.

The reader must now follow me to Ars sur Moselle, where we had determined to take up our quarters, if we could get any. That town will be in a central position for reaching any station from Gravelotte to Augney, and our division is sure never to be far from one of these points. The rain came down pitilessly to-day, and I had a wretched ride through the vineyards to Ars. When I arrived at the Lion d'Or, not a soul could I find to hold the mare. I forgot to make use of the talismanic word "Anglais," and not one of the waiters who were hurrying about the crowded room would look at me. I took the saddle off, and placing it out of the wet, stood in the porch holding the bridle. Presently I became aware that the landlord was remonstrating with me somewhat roughly for the inconvenience that I was putting his guests to by taking up half the door with the mare. At this moment I fortunately bethought me of trying what sympathies the man possessed towards my nation. So I told him that I was English.

People who are so fond of reporting our unpopularity among our French neighbours on account of the natural brusque manner which belongs to us, should have been there to have seen the change that came over the scene. One *garçon* brought me a glass of cognac, another held my horse, while a third,

having obtained leave from the worthy host, volunteered to lead me to a room—one out of two that he lived in with his wife. "Do not be afraid, monsieur," said he; "I have been a soldier servant in the Artillery of the Garde Imperiale, and I know what is fitting for a gentleman; come and see if my little home be not neat enough for you: for my wife, she shall go to her mother's, and for me, I can shift anywhere while you are in the town." It will be worth the reader's while to come and look at the quarters.

Down the High Street he led for some distance, and then turned into a terribly odoriferous passage to the right, up some very dirty stairs. Then we came to a door, on which was fixed a neat card, bearing his wife's name, notifying that she was a dressmaker. I found Madame Josin a pleasant, clean-looking little woman, in an equally pleasant and clean-looking little room, although some people might have thought that its size (about 11 feet × 7) was a bar to the former qualification. Anyhow, the contrast of it to the smelling staircase and passage was delightful. The first thing Josin did on entering was to take his wife up and kiss her; and then, with a smile which for its powers of making an ugly face look handsome I have never seen equalled, set her down and introduced me, remarking that

she was his "dear little bijou," who always made his home happy. He now walked up some steps, and opened a door leading into an inner room. He told me to enter, and then eyed me with the keen look of a child that hopes and expects to have pleasantly surprised you. I *was* surprised. I should have been no more surprised had I heard that there was a "cottage *ornée*" with pleasant grounds to be sold in Seven Dials. Here was the most perfect little bedroom I had ever seen in my life, by no means too small. A handsome mahogany bedstead, a cheval glass—in short, to describe every luxury in the way of furniture that it contained, I should have to get an upholsterer's list, for I do not know the names of half of them. Then upon the wall was the undeniable stamp of the old soldier; his discharge in a frame, round it the red tassels and cord gracefully hung—his spurs, and many other little companions of bygone times. Lest any cynic should remark of my friend, honest Josin, that he probably had pecuniary considerations lurking beneath his amiability, I will now say, that having occupied these rooms for a fortnight, and made use of his fuel to cook our food with, we offered him remuneration in the shape of two hundred franc notes. Nothing would induce him to accept of such a reward, and he would not hear of taking money at all. So we got him a sewing-

machine for his wife from Nancy, and I am sure earned his eternal gratitude.

When my companion arrived in the town, he was wet through, and thoroughly discomfited, having only succeeded with the greatest difficulty in getting an old cart which had twice been upset with him coming through the slippery vineyards. He drove up to the Lion d'Or, where I had been awaiting him, having returned from our new quarters.

We entered to see what we could procure for food. Monsieur Valjean, the proprietor of the café, is worthy of a special description. He is six feet high, and as upright as a dart. He also had been an old soldier of France, and of the Imperial Guard. His face is clean shaven, save a thick mustache and imperial, and he wears on his striking countenance a settled expression of stern grief. He, poor fellow, is one of the few amongst his compatriots who seems to realise the disgrace that his unhappy country is rapidly being covered with; and as he sits behind his bar, motionless as a statue, save when quietly he serves some Prussian with change for a thaler note, one is impelled to wish that his nation could possess some of the sobriety of disposition that one sees so unmistakably indicated in his rugged countenance.

When we enter, he asks us to pass through the

room up some stairs beyond, where we shall find Madame Valjean in the kitchen. Having complied with his request, we find a pleasant-looking woman, surrounded by others, all peeling potatoes or stirring the everlasting *bouillon* or coffee. A young Prussian officer has followed us up into the kitchen, which even here seems to be held sacred and forbidden ground, and gently relates over my shoulder that he has been on outpost duty for the last twenty-four hours, and has now been waiting for one hour for something to eat. To this Madame Valjean replies that she has nothing left for any one except the General up-stairs, whose dinner she is now cooking. Nevertheless, I have the pleasure of taking to the young officer a good helping of *bouillon* and prunes, which Madame Valjean gives to me as soon as the poor hungry Prussian's head and shoulders have disappeared down the steps. When I return for more, she remarks that the English eat enormously, and gives me another handsome helping.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WHEN we sallied into the café, after breakfasting in the kitchen, the first rumours of the Sedan catastrophe were going the round of the room. No one seemed to put the slightest faith in the report, when first it began to circulate sluggishly through the different arteries of Steinmetz's great army, that M'Mahon had been surrounded, with Napoleon and 80,000 soldiers, by the Crown Prince, and that the Emperor had yielded his sword. Poor Sergeant Valjean actually smiled when I told him of it; and we strolled out to the station.

As we passed along the street and came opposite the quarters of the General Commandant of the town, we observed a crowd of soldiers listening to a proclamation that the General was reading to them from a balcony. Now we knew proclamations from Prussian authorities were not of quite as frequent occurrence as from French, and also that the Prussian character was

not given to vapouring in quite the same ludicrous style, so we stopped to listen. My companion told me that it was an official bulletin of the victory at Sedan, and of the surrender of Napoleon III. When the General had finished, the crowd, which had by that time become considerable, set up a loud hurrah three times, as though from one mouth.

It is heartbreaking, positively, to hear a body of Prussian troops cheer. They use the same word as we do, but they give it forth without any enthusiasm, as we accept the term; and such a thing as the heart-stirring termination of "one cheer more" is unknown to them. Thus having given forth their automatical expression of delight, this crowd separated with scarcely any waving of caps; and as for being intoxicated with delight, there was not one single case amongst them. All the afternoon we heard continually in different directions the stereotyped hurrahs coming from bodies of soldiers as they learnt the glad tidings.

One instance of enthusiasm I did see. I was standing at the station later on, when a Prussian officer, whom I did not remember ever having set eyes upon before, seized me by both hands, and, assuring me that he had known me ever since I had been with the Prussian army, asked me if I could give him any confirmation of the news. I replied that I had heard an

official statement read by the General commanding the town. He, with an activity that would have done credit to a north-country wrestler, instantly flung his arms round my neck, and held me in so tight an embrace that I was just preparing to "cross-büttock" him when he released me, gasping out, "I thank you well for your good news; now shall I again quickly see my wife and little ones." Had our acquaintance been one of longer standing, I doubt not but that he would have saluted me on either cheek. Poor fellow! he along with many others were disappointed in their hopes, for on that night it was in every one's mouth, "We shall have peace now, and return home."

How fond those Germans are of home and its associations! Do you want to bring a smile into the rugged face of yon stolid-looking sentry? go talk to him about his wife and children, if he has any; if not, about his brothers and sisters! He will talk to you by the hour about them or yours in a kind, gentle way, in spite of his ruthless rugged look. Has not this all-pervading simple love of nature's gifts something to do with the German national strength? What does a Frenchman answer?

When I returned to the Lion d'Or, I noticed a gentleman, whose costume of black velvet coat, quiet trousers, and neat little boots, would have been more

adapted to the cliff at Brighton than the muddy, smoky room in which he was standing. With a want of breeding that belied my nationality, I ventured to address him, without a previous introduction, in very bad German. He at once replied in the very best of English, informing me that he was a merchant of Hamburg, and asking me what I thought of the news, and whether I believed it. I replied that I had no doubt as to its authenticity, and expressed a hope and belief that the Germans would use their power with moderation, and content themselves with the annexation of Strasbourg and Phalzbourg, without also requiring Metz — expressing a hint that the latter addition would be most displeasing to England. The German nearly burst out laughing, and, with more truth than civility, rejoined, "You cannot mean to say that your country dare oppose our wishes about annexation, now that we are so powerful, and that your army could scarcely compete with that of Belgium?" Being unprepared for this home-thrust, and detesting swagger, I contented myself with answering his query in such ambiguous terms as I could hastily summon to my assistance.

Presently my companion came up, and then four or five more Hamburg merchants, all speaking English fluently. They had subscribed a large sum of money

amongst themselves, and had invested it in different comforts for the soldiers. While sitting in the café, a strange sound of music came up the street, borne along by a gusty wind, which gave an unwonted chilliness to the air. It came nearer. One of the Germans recognised the air played as that of the Prussian dead-march. I forget who is the composer; but though it was weird and sad enough, the clarionettes at times seeming almost to shriek when contrasted with the solemn accompaniment of the muffled drums, it sounded to me vastly inferior to the beautiful Dead March in Saul. Presently the sad procession wound round the corner of the street, and we could see that some poor officer was going to have a more decent burial than usual. At the head of the *cortège* walked a tall Lutheran priest, bearing on his head the quaint velvet cap such as we see in old pictures of that school. I followed them to the cemetery, which was about a mile off. When the coffin had been lowered into the grave, the major of the deceased's battalion and his twin-brother standing by it, the priest mounted the heap of earth that had been turned out of the ground, and began an eloquent oration. I could not understand all he said; but I knew, by the effect which it produced on those who did, that it must have been heart-stirring. In it he told us that the poor

young fellow, who now slept his last sleep, was but twenty-one years old; that fighting bravely at Gravelotte, he had been wounded, and from that day had gradually lingered, until, as he had fought bravely for his country, he had bravely yielded his spirit with resignation. The old major sobbed like a child; and the poor brother, as he turned his back upon the little walled ground with its clayey soil, looked as though he were leaving in it that which was necessary to his very existence. A salute was not fired over the grave —for fear, I suppose, of alarming the neighbouring outposts.

It was now time to avail ourselves of an invitation to supper, given us by the Hamburg merchants; so we repaired to the house indicated, and found them about to commence operations on roast-beef with potatoes. In spite of our being constantly forced on to the untenable ground of defending the martial strength of our country, we got on amiably enough. The only argument which to them, as merchants, seemed crushing, was when, pushed very hard, I said, with a certain amount of warmth and earnestness of manner, that, in case any continental nation gave us trouble from a diplomatic or military point of view, we should simply subsidise Bismark and Von Moltke. This statement, which they received at first

with perfect gravity, eventually put a pleasant turn to a threatening discussion. They were very anxious for peace, wishing as terms a handsome indemnity and the French fleet. It was curious how, on the first blush of the victory at Sedan, every one thought that it must be decisive.

When we arrived at Josin's, we found that his wife had waited up to let us in, and it was now necessary that we should escort her to her mother's, as no one was allowed to be in the streets after nine o'clock without a pass. Returning, we were stopped by a patrol of *polizei*, who made some difficulty about letting us go, until their *feldwebel*, coming up, swore lustily at them, remarking that they must be besotten not to see that we were English gentlemen, and not French spies. He was one of the many who had partaken of our flasks on the march in time of need. The next morning, the 4th, my companion went to Pont-au-Mousson by train, procuring an order for that purpose from the Stat-commandant.

Nothing of particular interest happened during the day, if I except the passing through the town of sixty waggons full of soldiers in different stages of convalescence, on their way to the station to go *viâ* Pont-au-Mousson and Nancy to the South of Germany. These were all Gravelotte victims. There was

not a sufficiency of trains to carry them off all in one day, and so sheds had been erected for those who had to wait, and here most of them slept one night. On every bench, or seat of any description, was some poor fellow having his wounds dressed. About one of them I have a note. He was a Prussian soldier of the line, and his wound, as far as I could see from a superficial inspection, was a curious one. He must have had a narrow escape with his life. The bullet had struck him on the head, glanced to the top, and there rested, detained by the skin, which had become congested to such an extent as to give the bullet the appearance of being imbedded in flesh.

It was an apparently clumsy attempt to extract this that attracted my attention. The patient was held by three students, while the doctor, having made a most inadequate incision, endeavoured with a pair of small pliers to pull the bullet out. This seemed to give the unfortunate soldier most intense pain. Suddenly the pliers slipped and lost their hold of the bullet. I now observed that the surgeon's hand was shaking, and that he was again going to try and drag out the ball without increasing the aperture. I suggested, as delicately as I could, that it would be expedient to extend the incision, and then, in a half bantering strain, asked to be allowed to "give a cut." He

handed me his knife, and using it with, I have no doubt, more boldness than skill, before he could again use the pliers I had taken the bullet out with my fingers and placed it in the writhing patient's hand. The poor doctor was evidently suffering from the complaint so prevalent amongst his *confrères*—over-work. They have, indeed, had enough to do, and nobly have they done it.

Returning to the town, I found that the whole of the 8th Army Corps was moving from Gravelotte in this direction. The 2d Army Corps was to take its place. General Von Göben's headquarters were to be fixed here. Our brigade was to have its headquarters again at Vaux, and was to furnish foreposts in that neighbourhood. The 7th Army Corps was leaving Ars to establish its headquarters at Jouy, a village on the right bank of the Moselle.

This evening I had for the first time the pleasure of examining that chaste work of art and much-loved decoration, the iron cross. There have been such admirable sketches of it in our illustrated journals that it is unnecessary for me to describe it minutely here. The officer who wore this one was, I believe, the first of General Steinmetz's army who received it; but as I am not sure of this, I will not record his name.

It may not, however, be generally known that this

order was founded by Frederic William III., in the War of Liberation, as it was styled, of 1813, and is renewed by William I. in this war, which is also considered one of liberation from the long-threatened aggression of France. Thus, from the war of 1813 to 1870, this order has been in abeyance.

An amusing incident happened to me the next morning, which I must record, although it will scarcely bring credit to the Prussian soldier as a sentry. After breakfast I set out for a stroll across the Moselle to inspect Jouy, which I understood would soon be our quarters. On approaching the beautiful bridge which crosses the Moselle at Ars, I was suddenly confronted by two sentinels of the 7th Army Corps, who did not know me, and who demanded "*Haben Sie eine karte?*" remarking that no one was allowed to cross without a permission from the General in command of the town. I was staggered for a moment, for I had not brought my *erlaubniss* with me. I considered that I might arouse suspicion by acknowledging that I had none, and could scarcely expect him to let me through on the statement that I had "left it at home." So, remembering that I had my passport with me, I, with a somewhat indignant air, answered, "*Ja; wollen Sie es sehen?*" at the same time dexterously extracting the important-looking document and flourishing it in

his face. I had gummed it on to parchment to prevent its tearing, and it now had a most official sound as I drew it thus suddenly from its case. The sentry positively jumped, and gasped out the word "*Gut!*" looking at the same time with a hopelessly bothered expression across to his double. I was just going to proceed, when I saw this latter step across the road with the air of a man who "knows all about it." He requested me to let him see the pass. I handed it to him, and when he had studied carefully *my* signature, he also was satisfied that it was *gut*, and returned it to me—now almost bursting with laughter. I executed this *ruse* successfully on several subsequent occasions, and never did so without dubbing the Prussian soldier the worst sentry in existence.

When I returned to Ars, I found our hopes that the Sedan disaster might prove an end to the war were quite groundless. A despatch had been sent to Bazaine from the headquarters of the 1st Army, counselling his surrender. He is said to have returned the characteristic reply, that he believed the report of the Sedan disaster was a "dodge" of the Prussians, and that, even if it were true, until his master the Emperor, who had ordered the town to be held, should order it to be given up, the Prussians would have to take it.

CHAPTER XIX.

My companion returned to-day, and with him an Anglicised German, a traveller for some Leeds machine-manufacturer. It appears that, when war broke out, some wealthy north German farmer had just invested in two steam traction-engines from this firm. These machines had just arrived at Hamburg when war was declared, and with praiseworthy astuteness Mr Toepffer at once went to Count von Moltke, and asked him if they would be of service to him for dragging heavy artillery into position. The Count's reply was laconic as usual: "Why did you not come before? I will take them." They are of 40-horse power, and capable of being used as stationary engines, possessing each large rollers on which could be coiled 500 yards of chain cable. Thus the two engines together could draw great weights from 1000 yards' distance. Mr Toepffer had come here for the purpose of visiting General Steinmetz, as commander of the 1st Army, to see whether he

would give any orders concerning them, as they were all this time lying idle at Pont-au-Mousson. The General's answer to him was, that if General von Moltke had bought them, it was not without some special plan, which he would develop in his own good time, and that consequently he (General Steinmetz) would not venture to give any order about them. Mr Toepffer was referred to General Schwartz, commanding the artillery of the 1st Army, but only to receive the same answer. It was lucky for them all, as it turned out, that they knew their man so well. On returning to Pont-au-Mousson he found orders awaiting him direct from Von Moltke, to open a line of transport for commissariat with his two engines from that town to Commercy, the route by which at that time the Crown Prince's supplies were chiefly forwarded; and on the return journeys they were to bring back the wounded.

The neatness of this piece of strategy becomes at once apparent on perusing a map. Toul, not having yet fallen, prevented the Prussians from commanding the railway between Pont-au-Mousson and Commercy. From the latter place they had the railway in their power as far as they had advanced. So that by making use of these engines, which could take immense trains at the rate of from three to four miles an hour, on the highroad between Pont-au-Mousson and Commercy,

they nearly obviated the inconvenience that arose from Toul not yet being in their possession. It was wonderfully characteristic of Von Moltke; first of all, to have the engines at all; and secondly, to have them exactly in the place where, and at the time when, they were most wanted.

It was on the occasion of these visits to Generals Schwartz and Steinmetz, whose headquarters were at Jouy, that I made the acquaintance of two most delightful specimens of Prussian officers. I can pay them no better compliment, nor can I more graphically portray them to my countrymen, than by describing them as resembling the highest stamp of officer in our own army, save that by nature they spoke a different language and bore a different uniform. Bleiken von Schmeling, captain in the Guard of the Artillery of Prussia, and Von During, captain in Queen Elizabeth's Regiment, the 3d Grenadiers of the Guard, will always remain in my grateful memory as choice specimens of highly bred and educated gentlemen in the literal acceptation of the term, and evidences of the high state of civilisation of the country to which they belong. They have proved brave and valuable soldiers to their nation in this war.

Hauptmann von Schmeling, I am truly glad to say, has, since I left the headquarters of the 1st Army,

been decorated with the Iron Cross. I have not heard that Von During has been equally fortunate. The former asked us to lunch with him at the mess of General Steinmetz's staff. He led us up a pleasant road, set on either side in elegant villas. Into one of these he turned, walked up a marble staircase and through a handsome room, on to a velvety-looking lawn beyond. Here many of the staff officers were assembled, awaiting luncheon, lolling on quaint rustic seats. They were of all regiments, from the *aristocratic* Cuirassier, answering to our "Life Guards," down to the *useful* Polizei. They greeted us courteously, and presently, luncheon being announced, we all entered the house and took our places.

Soon Von Schmeling began to recur to the subject that I have alluded to before, as seeming, after his duty, always to be nearest to the Prussian's heart. I joined issue with him heartily enough, and time fled quickly as we talked of our wives and children, and pleasant times, wondering when we should again see them. I was much amused at his asking, "Did fathers in England dance their little ones on their knees, because he was sure that my little girl, who I had informed him was a wee thing two years old, would like that game very much." Thus simply he ran on, showing a gentle mind unhardened by contact with the rough scenes

that are the portion of most men who go out into the world, but more especially of the soldier.

At the end of luncheon he rose and proposed the health of the absent wives and families, a toast which was drunk with a quiet fervour that told of the true hearts contained in those sturdy frames.

Von Schmeling now offered to propose to the officers present that we should be made honorary members of the mess, as they had a professed cook from Berlin with them, and certain delicacies in the way of vegetables, which used to come all the way from their capital. I begged him, however, to wait until we had left, as there might be objections to our joining which his brother officers would scruple to mention in our presence; so, saying he would let us know to-morrow, he proposed to take us round to view some of the redoubts that had been thrown up under his supervision to the south and south-east of Metz. He placed horses at our disposal, and we were on the point of setting out when an order came for him from General Schwartz, whose aide-de-camp he was, which prevented his accompanying us; so, wishing us luck, he turned his horse's head and galloped off, leaving us to see the batteries by ourselves, and in possession of two fine chargers.

Certainly this was hospitality. We had not known

him two hours; in that time he had entertained us at his board, given us a permanent invitation to make use of the Staff's table, and finally left us with two capital mounts, to ride where we liked. Had we arrived with first-class introductions and a certain amount of retinue, knowing the world a little, I should not have been astonished at the reception. But we had turned up quite unexpectedly, self-introduced; and the reader will remember that at the commencement of my walk with the Prussians I wore only an old shooting-suit, which naturally had grown no younger, while my companion was little better dressed. At home our officers are proverbial for the hospitality they deal out—few have experienced more of it than myself; but it forms an amusing speculation to think what sort of a reception any individual civilian, no matter of what nationality, would obtain, if he presented himself with a like appearance, and on a like occasion, at the headquarters of a British commander-in-chief; for about this time every one had more than he well knew how to do, and the amount of irritation was proportionately great.

We set out on our ride, turning to our right towards St Blaize. We were constantly meeting sentries; but when they saw us in field-officers' saddles, they let us pass. Making our way through a wood, we came to a battery of 12-pounders, situated between St Blaize and

Metz, marked in the map, and had scarcely reached it, when suddenly the clouds, which had been quietly gathering in angry-looking council for some time, sent forth a deafening clash of thunder, and with it a perfect deluge of rain. From the shelter of the wood we watched the town of Metz, about 4000 yards distant. Over it hung those peculiar thundery-looking clouds, from which ever and anon would dart out, as though aimed at the destruction of the Cathedral, a long, fiery, and jagged streak, followed quickly by a roar that suggested disappointment at the failure of the attempt.

There was no appearance of the rain abating, so we rode back to Jouy, leaving our horses at Von Schmeling's stables, and then walked across the bridge to Ars.

At the Lion d'Or we found old Josin working away with his usual beaming countenance, as though it were time of peace and he serving a moderate number of his own townsfolk, and not an immoderate number of soldiers of an invading army. We pushed forward to the kitchen, where we found ourselves kindly welcomed by Madame Valjean. While we dried our clothes by the fire, Josin made the discovery of a miraculous cask of ale in the cellar, which refused to be tapped unless well assured that its contents were not going to strengthen the already too strong Prussian army.

Everybody was astonished when it became known that the Emperor was to go to Germany *viâ* Belgium.

We had expected that he would have been brought here, and from hence sent to Courcelles. The respect shown for him by the King was much approved by the Prussian officers. It was related to us by more than one of them, that so completely had the Emperor been pillaged by his own soldiers, that the King had to place 2000 thalers at the disposal of his secretary for present expenses. I believe their story to be perfectly true, as I heard it on the highest authority.

A curious affair took place between the foreposts at Jussy to-day in our absence, by which each side lost a man. A Prussian double post took no notice of two old women who were apparently picking grapes, and, while so doing, gradually working towards them. When within eighty yards, each old woman suddenly produced a rifle from under her petticoats, and quickly taking aim, shot one of the poor Prussian sentries dead while they were endeavouring to explain to themselves the unaccountable phenomenon of two old women with rifles under their petticoats.

Though a German generally comes to the right conclusion eventually, it takes him some time to solve so deep a mystery as this appeared to be; and doubtless the remaining Prussian sentry was unwilling to fire on the female sex, even after they had shown such indelicacy as to carry rifles under their petticoats. Thus it was that he allowed two more bullets to whizz past

him before it dawned upon his thinking mind that these gay old ladies might possibly be bloodthirsty Frenchmen in disguise. No sooner had this suspicion flashed across his brain than, quietly kneeling down, in spite of more bullets from the old ladies, who were now pegging away at him as fast as they could load, he shot one of them dead. Then springing over the trench, he charged down upon the other, who evidently having heard of the immorality of the Prussian soldier, and fearing to fall a victim to the rude love of this one, turned and ran actively down the hill. The German continued the pursuit for some distance until, observing a body of tirailleurs coming forward to cover the retreat of his chase, he in his turn had to fly. So hard was he pressed that he had not time even to take possession of the corpse; but he had the satisfaction of finding, from a hasty examination, which entailed the lifting up of its petticoats, that this one at all events was indisputably of the male sex, for it had on red trousers down to the ankles. He told me, however, quite gravely, that it was impossible for him to be quite sure as to the sex of the other. A covering party of his regiment now came up, having been alarmed at the firing. A slight skirmish ensued, in which we had one wounded and the French another killed, and each side retired carrying its own dead.

CHAPTER XX.

I HAVE now come in my narrative to the 7th of September. It has an interest in my recollection as the day on which several of my dear friends, including the colonel of the 60th Regiment, his major of the 2d Battalion, and my own dear Colonel von Henning, received the decoration of the Iron Cross. The major was he who had given me sausage and bread on the march before the battle of Gravelotte. His colonel was a very Falstaff for size and good temper, with always a cheery laugh and good joke to hand. We met them standing not far from the battery which I have marked on the road between Ars and Metz.

At this point we turned to the left and walked up the hill through the vineyards to Vaux, where, as I said, the 33d headquarters had been again stationed. We were welcomed with more cordiality than ever. The oberst-lieutenant went to his bedroom and fetched his decoration: his face beamed with a smile that

always looked peculiarly sweet, from the fact that it sat upon a countenance that could look very stern. When he had kissed the cross many times, I assisted him to adjust it.

A remarkable instance occurred to-day of this man's good-heartedness. On his arrival at Vaux the usual proclamation was issued relative to the inhabitants surrendering arms. They were all thrown into a barn, over which was placed a guard. There came to him to-day one of the villagers, an old soldier of the First Empire; one who had fought at the battles of Austerlitz and Jena.

"*Mon* colonel," were the old man's opening words; "I have a little dagger that, according to your orders, I have surrendered: it is very dear to me, and has become as a companion to me; may I have it back?"

"Where is it?" asked Colonel von Henning.

"It lies with many others in a barn."

"Come with me," replied the other in the best French he could muster—"*Venez avec moi.*"

He rose from his chair and walked with the old relic of French glory through the village to the barn, and with his own hands picked out from the rusty pile the much-prized dagger and restored it. I am glad to say that this graceful act has already been recorded in one of our leading journals; and let Englishmen be-

lieve that a nation which can produce men capable of such simply kind deeds—for they are of common occurrence enough amongst Prussian officers—cannot also produce, save exceptionally, men who are gratified at the performance of unjustly cruel ones.

In the evening we had a cosy supper at home with Madame Josin and her sister, Josin's duties at the *café* preventing his presence. She was immensely pleased with a bottle of milk that I had brought from Vaux, where I had paid my querulous old woman and her little cow at the *auberge* a visit.

On the 8th we determined to pay a visit to General Steinmetz, to ask him to extend our passes, so that we might be free to go anywhere. There was no real necessity for doing this, as we found out afterwards that General von Göben's signature would take us anywhere. But as in our passes the specification was that we were to be "assisted and allowed to go wherever the 8th Army Corps went," we thought it would be more strictly honourable not to make use of it beyond those limits. Guess, then, our astonishment when General Steinmetz, after receiving us courteously and hearing our request, said, "What permission have you already, gentlemen?" We quickly, with feelings of confidence, showed the passes bearing Von Göben's signature. "I do not understand these, gentlemen," he said. "The King has

forbidden any one to follow the army, save with his official sanction; and," he went on, folding up the pieces of paper, "I will detain these, and question General von Göben about them." I do not know what my countenance was like when these words fell from the General, but my companion's was a study of indignant astonishment. However, the old man spoke so quietly, and we were so completely taken aback, that we had no argument to offer or remonstrance to make, and so we were ushered back into the lobby. As far as I am concerned, as I stepped into the polished oak hall from the marble staircase, I felt very much like the fox who had had his tail clipped. There was a crowd of staff officers around; and on hearing what had happened, they were very indignant, and condoled with us — two of them remarking, whose names I refrain from mentioning, that "it was only a bit of old Steinmetz's usual childishness." That might be, but we felt thoroughly forlorn. We felt that we had now no right anywhere, and could well understand Aladdin's sensations when he was done out of his magic lamp or ring, or whatever it was. We could not be sure of even passing the sentries on the bridge, in order to return to Ars, without a pass. It did not take me long, however, to make up my mind to a course of action. I determined to go to General von Göben

immediately, and represent to him that to take away the pass from two Englishmen who had borne it for two months with the Prussian army, and who were well known amongst a large section of it, would be to insinuate that they had committed a breach of faith by which they had forfeited the confidence that had been placed in them by one of Prussia's highest generals; that the consequences of such an insinuation would be very grave, &c. &c. As will be seen by the sequel, I was not destined to vindicate my powers of argument to a Prussian General on this occasion.

We passed the bridge, fortunately without being challenged by the sentries, and should have at once hastened to the headquarters of General von Göben, but that we met him on his way to what we afterwards learned was a council of war at General Steinmetz's. He kindly acknowledged our salutes, and ascertaining from one of his aides-de-camp that he would not return until the evening, we passed on. Arrived at Josin's, we did not find our anxiety dissipate. We knew that now at any time our room might be required from us, as we could no longer say that we were two Englishmen officially attached to the 8th Army Corps, and every step we heard upon the stairs we expected to be the announcement of a soldier with

his billet. We supped in silence, and at nine o'clock prepared for the interview with the General.

When we arrived at his quarters, a little inn in a back street, he had not yet returned, so we asked to see his *état* major, Oberst von Wittensdorf. We were ushered up-stairs, after waiting a short time in the guardroom chatting with some young cavalry officers who were waiting for orders. We were then requested to wait on the landing while the servant took in our names to the *oberst*. He disappeared through a doorway, and while he was gone I paraded and drilled my vast host of eloquent arguments. We were not prepared for what followed. The door was suddenly opened, and Oberst von Wittensdorf issued smiling, and greeting us cordially. "Oh, gentlemen," said he, "you have come about your passes, no doubt; it was a trifling error on the part of General Steinmetz that caused you to be deprived of them. General von Göben has begged me to return them, and I am sorry that you should have been subjected to the annoyance, and trust that you have suffered no inconvenience by it!" All this in the best of English, and the most courteous tone. I do not think I have mentioned this valuable officer before. He is fully six feet high, of distinguished mien, and has a stern, iron appearance, but a gentle and amiable manner. I assure the reader that we felt

very grateful to him on this occasion, and he sent us away with very light hearts.

The next day, the 9th, proved a very amusing one. In the morning we walked up to Vaux, and had a beautiful performance of music; in the evening we witnessed a mimic bombardment. Sallying down the town, we found waiting at the door of the *café*, and in the street, about one hundred French prisoners—Turcos and Voltigeurs. They were being taken to Metz—a part of the number sent in in exchange for 700 Prussians who had been sent out. No one was allowed to address them. They had marched from Sedan, and looked weary enough, poor fellows. We distributed a few boxes of cigars amongst them; and when they were sufficiently rested, they set out for Metz under escort.

We overtook them just as they had come within shot of the French foreposts along the road to Metz, and had hoisted one or two white flags. The escort walked in amongst the prisoners, so that it would have been impossible to have fired on them without killing both French and Prussians together.

We turned off at this point, getting a lift up to Vaux in one of the regimental carts which was returning from Ars, whither it had been for supplies. There were seven or eight 33d men in the cart, all rejoicing at the

prospect of consuming a fine cask of wine that they had bought, and on which I sat in the middle of the cart. The whole of our regiment was under arms, ready to turn out as a covering party in case there was any treachery towards the flag of truce. Arrived at the chateau, the band came into the court-yard to play; but the colonel did not think that the villagers could hear it well there, and ordered the bandmaster to go to a small open place in the village; for he said, "I will try and make these poor people happy with my music." Chairs were brought up, and we sat round, the colonel saying a kind word to one poor woman, or giving a few gooseberries to another, patting this child on the head, and so on, gleaning a little love from every one.

We had not long been enjoying our pipes, and the reverie so invariably induced by beautiful German music, when rain began to fall. It was drawing in towards evening, and the sky gave indications of the approach of a wet night; so we rose to return to Ars, but the colonel insisted on our coming into the chateau and taking some refreshment before starting. Then the rain came on heavier, and we waited until it should abate its fury; so that by the time we were drinking a parting-glass with old Joseph in his sanctum, preparatory to really setting out, it was quite dark.

On emerging from the courtyard into the village, we found the streets and square blocked up with the whole regiment, under arms, in spite of the rain, which was now pouring down. Something was up, evidently; but what? None of our friends among the officers would tell us; but they hinted that we might see some fun if we waited with them, and did not mind a ducking. We readily welcomed the prospect of something more exciting than had taken place lately, and entered a porch where one or two of the officers were standing out of the rain. Here we waited quietly the development of the mystery.

As I looked out from the doorway on the mass of human beings that filled the streets, standing in their great grey cloaks, each with his rifle carefully covered from the rain, which pelted on their heads, and rushed down the hill in a yellow stream over their feet, I could not help reflecting what perfect emblems of uncomplaining endurance they were.

Presently the village clock struck half-past six. In less than two minutes the battalion was marching steadily up the heights over Vaux, in the direction of Jussy. A quarter of a mile of this brought us to the opening of the wood towards Jussy that I have described a short way back. The battalion was halted on this side of the opening; but as soon as darkness ren-

dered discovery improbable, they were thrown forward to form an extended line all along the edge of the wood from this point upwards, facing towards Metz. In this way the head of the battalion was contiguous to the 1st and 3d battalions, which were under arms at the top of the hill, and, I presume, disposed in like manner.

By this time we had guessed that some bombardment was going to take place, and that our brigade was one of the covering parties for the batteries in case the enemy should turn out for a sortie. Our position, it will be observed, was an excellent one, strategically speaking. We were in close proximity to the batteries and redoubts raised by the Prussians on these heights, and could fill them in five minutes if an assault were attempted in that direction; while, should the enemy direct a sortie against the guns that presently opened on them from the valley by Ars, we had only to let them get far enough towards those guns to be enabled to drop down and take them in flank or rear.

I was standing talking to Lieutenant Gatung, who had had to come out through all the mud in his slippers, as he was suffering from sore feet, when my eye was attracted to the valley by a flash of light. In a quarter of a minute or so came the report of a cannon.

It was the signal for commencing what, from the scale on which it was conducted, can best be described as a mimic bombardment.

Guns from every Prussian battery to the south and west of Metz opened fire; but as the biggest guns they had in position were 12-pounders, we never could understand what object was to be served. We descended into a vineyard to the left of, and about 100 yards distant from, a battery below Vaux. For fully a quarter of an hour the big guns in Metz took no notice of the pigmy effort. At last, however, Mont St Quentin appeared to have been stung into answering. A bright flash shot out from the darkness overhanging Metz, then came the whirr of a shell, which burst to our right, and at no great distance. This was a feeler for the covering parties.

I wonder what graphic mind first suggested the word "whistling" as a fitting epithet for the sound of a shell. He might have applied the term with equal propriety to the notes of an ophicleide or trombone. The fact is, there is no describing the sound. It is exactly the noise that you would expect to be made by a large cylindrically-shaped piece of metal cleaving its way through the air with a rotary motion. Take a stick with a crook to it in your hand, whirl it round as fast as you possibly can, and you will hear some-

thing the same sort of noise which a 24-pound conical shot makes at a distance of 3000 yards, at the commencement of its journey towards you. This continues, increasing as it comes nearer, until you imagine that a whirlwind has been rolled up in a ball and hurled at you. Instinctively you put down your head (at least I did); then, if you are wise, you throw yourself down flat and endeavour to be in front of the shell when it explodes, as these conical projectiles throw fifty per cent more bits to the side and rear than forward.

It was a sound such as I have endeavoured to describe above, instantly following a flash that we judged came from Plappeville, that brought us to "attention." "Look out!" said my companion; "I used to be able to judge these fellows pretty well in the Crimea: this one is coming straight for us." As the noise grew louder, and matters seemed coming to a climax, we threw ourselves down. I slipped, and, unable to recover myself in my heavy frieze, which was soaked with the rain, rolled into a ditch, down which was pouring a perfect sea of yellow mud, causing a roar of laughter from my comrade. Thus do absurd things happen at the gravest moments. With a rushing sound that was almost deafening, the shell now came and buried itself—oh, joy!—with a thud and not an explosion, in the soft earth of the vineyard, separated

from us only by a little hedge sufficient to prevent our being covered by the mud splashed up. I suppose that the resistance offered it by the wet ground had been insufficient to cause explosion. We did not go near it that night; but a day or two afterwards we found the dumb monster self-interred, and could realise the danger we had escaped.

I can see some of my military friends smiling at my recounting at such length so everyday an occurrence in war; but I beg them to remember that I am happy to be able to state that this was not an everyday occurrence to me, and if they laugh at the precautions I took and here suggest, they may call to mind that, as I was not a "soldier seeking the bubble reputation at the cannon's mouth," I failed to perceive the necessity of behaving as such. In short, I did not feel myself justified in throwing away an opportunity of prolonging a very pleasant existence. The firing from the Prussian batteries was now going on very briskly, whereas you might count the number of replies from Metz.

The fog and rain came down so thickly that it was impossible to distinguish the flashes even of the guns shortly after this event, so we determined to wend our way gradually back to Ars. Presently we came upon a sentry; he was of the 60th Regiment, and

knew us at once. Then we came to a little chapel which was inhabited by two officers in command of the forepost: they were of the reserve, and had only just come from Germany as recruits for the regiment after its fearful mutilation at Gravelotte. They were very unaccustomed to this sort of work; and as we looked in, seeing a light in the window, they were listening with apparent awe to a *feldwebel*, who was giving them a glowing description of the battle of the 18th, the interest of which was now and then heightened by the booming of the guns in the valley. Like most men fresh from home, they had some "little comforts" that were rarities. Thus they were drinking port-wine negus, which they insisted on our sharing. The sergeant helped off our coats; and as usual, when they heard that we were English, they showed us every sort of attention in their power. They begged us to accept of their shelter, and share their bed of straw if the rain did not cease; but we would not do this, and after talking for about half an hour, during which time the firing had ceased, we resumed our coats and set out into the blackest night I ever saw, much warmed by the good negus.

We had now to descend, and, half running half sliding down the slippery path which led to Ars, we came full tilt up against an artilleryman, who, with presented

sabre, shouted out "Halt." An inch further and I should have been impaled on the weapon. "Officer and friend!" I bawled, lustily. "Advance then, officer and friend, and give sign and counter-sign." I felt inclined to quote from one of John Leech's celebrated inebriate representations, and remark, "Come, that's a good un." But I felt that it would be throwing pearls before swine, so I spluttered out—for I was laughing heartily—that we had cards from General von Göben. "Follow me to the guard-house, then, and show your cards," now quoth the sentry in an incredulous tone of voice. The "guard-house," we found, consisted of two hurdles and some planks, under which, partially protected from the rain, were two officers with a lantern playing cards. The sentry told our story, and one of the officers came out—he could not ask us in—took our pass, looked at it, and at once gave us the sign and counter-sign of the night, and offering us a pipe, expressed his hope that we should reach home, as we did, without further trouble.

The next day, the 10th, we strolled up as usual to Vaux, when the colonel said that he was sorry that he had been unable to warn us of the bombardment the night before, but that he had had strict orders from headquarters to keep it a secret, and he expressed himself heartily glad that we had found it out by chance.

I suppose that there were no more than twelve guns firing from different points on the Prussian side, and out of these only two seem to have done any mischief to the enemy. These had, at a distance of 3500 metres, pitched every one of the shells exactly in the spot against which they were directed, a newly-erected earth-work close to Montigny, which in the morning was found knocked to pieces. Considering there was no sighting shot, this showed great skill and accuracy of calculation. When the shots were fired you could scarcely see your hand in front of your face; and as for seeing whether the shells were bursting in the right place, it was out of the question. I expect it was for this reason that the bombardment was so soon closed. On asking the officer in charge of this particular battery how they managed to shoot so well in the dark, he replied, in a most unconceited manner, "Oh, it was all luck; we measured off the distance on our maps for the elevation, and took a bearing of the direction in the day-time."

I slept at Vaux that night, and during it the colonel received orders to march at daybreak through Ars to Augny, to make way for the Hessian division, which was to take the place of the 15th. The whole of the 8th Army Corps was to be moved across the river, and to have its headquarters at Jouy; while the 7th Army

Corps, which was at Jouy now, was to work round eastward. The Hessian contingent formed the 11th Army Corps. At three A.M. the 33d Regiment was under arms, and in a short time we were on the march, meeting one of the Hessian regiments. These formed in every way a pitiful contrast to the Prussian troops, and yet the officers seemed to think an immense deal of themselves. We did not leave Joseph without a hearty farewell, and although it was but four o'clock in the morning he found us a rare stirrup-cup. Arrived at Ars, we left the regiment, which continued its route to Augny, a good-sized village, marked in the map, to the south and a little east of Metz.

Arrived at Josin's, we found that several Hessian officers had asked for our room, but had always gone away when shown the piece of paper on which we had written our address. The house, however, was full of the soldiers; and as we did not know any officers of this Army Corps, we determined to move as soon as possible to Jouy, where General von Göben's headquarters were, especially as we had no doubt that by this time we had been made honorary members of the mess of General Steinmetz's staff. So in the afternoon we walked over, and called on Von During. He promised to look out for quarters for us; and we strolled about the village, which is a very beautiful one, having

fine gardens on either side of the highroad running through it. He told us some sad tales about outrages by the peasants, and fearful retaliation by the soldiery. Thus two peasants, who had caught an officer and cut his fingers off, otherwise mutilating him, had been hanged at Corny, then the headquarters of Prince Frederick Charles. Two others had met with a yet more horrible fate. A cuirassier had been sent with a despatch to one of the most advanced foreposts beyond Augny. Not returning, a search was instituted for him. His body was found in a field, and two peasants in the act of hacking it to pieces. These peasants were seized and handed over to the pioneers, who quartered them with their axes. I narrate all these facts here, as I have endeavoured throughout this book to give an impartial account of the conduct of both French and Prussians, that people may not be able to say that I have related French and concealed Prussian ferocity.

We now met Von Schmeling, and were right glad to see his cheery countenance. "It is all right," he said; "you must come and sup with me to-night, and after that you belong to our mess, and pay just as we do." We were rejoiced to hear this, as we now felt we could be independent of the 33d, and not burden them with our appetites any more.

I chaffed Von Schmeling, as the artillery officer, about the preceding night's bombardment. He laughed, and replied that it certainly was a terrible *bêtise*, and that all the artillery officers had been dead against it, but that the order had come from high quarters. He did not himself know what was the object of it. It was not, however, to be repeated; and it had been finally settled to reduce Metz by starvation, and the report then was that it could not hold out for three weeks. I offered to bet that it would hold out nearer six, judging by the different conversations I had with the French peasants. In the event it turned out that I was not far wrong.

A spy from Metz to-day brought a report from Metz showing that Bazaine did not scruple at what means he employed to preserve discipline. Two officers refused to obey some order of his, so they were instantly made prisoners and shot.

Von Schmeling had just returned from Pont-au-Mousson, and brought wonderful accounts of the French prisoners who were still passing through to Germany from Sedan. He had seen one train containing 950 officers, and had heard that 50 generals had been captured with the army, and that to-morrow 1800 French horses would pass through Jouy. I told him that to-morrow I should come over and

see if he could not procure us a room somewhere in this village, and he promised me to do his best.

When we returned to Ars to sleep for the last time in the corporal's pretty little room, we were welcomed as usual by his cheery wife and her sister, who had some mulled red wine prepared. The next day, the 12th of September, we determined, as we had nothing particular to do, to try our luck fishing in the Moselle.

I soon got tired of this, and leaving my companion and an old French peasant who had accompanied us—one of those local "go-betweens" between tourist and fish—patiently fishing by the bridge, I crossed over to again persecute my new friend Von Schmeling for quarters. I found him at General Schwartz's headquarters hard at work. He jumped up instantly, telling me that he could only find one room in Jouy, which was locked up and part of his general's quarters. "But come with me," he said; "I will take you to him, and perhaps he will let you have the room." We descended from the room that formed his temporary office, and met a wizened-looking little officer, whom the broad, double red stripe on his trousers betokened to be a general, entering the hall-door. The house was a small villa. A passage ran through it to a beautiful little garden, only separated from the Moselle by a rich-looking meadow. On either side of this passage were two rooms. The

general was turning the key in the lock of the room on the left-hand side as you enter from the road, when Von Schmeling accosted him, having first saluted. He then introduced me to General Schwartz, who recognised me kindly as having conversed with him about the traction-engines a few days ago. When he understood what I required, he pulled another key out of his pocket, and, pointing to the room opposite, said, "You are welcome to make use of that room as long as you like. I will order my servant to remove some baggage from it that might incommode you." I thanked the general for this fresh bit of Prussian kindness, and he entered his room. Von Schmeling was as pleased as a child about the success of his negotiations, and indeed his whole thoughts seemed to be taken up with devising schemes for making us happy among the Prussians.

He placed the key which he had taken from General Schwartz in the keyhole and opened the door. The *persiénnes* outside were shut, so the room was pretty dark. I opened these, and then the light shone into what was evidently intended for a drawing-room. It was a small room about eighteen feet square, with a polished chestnut-wood floor as usual. Muslin curtains festooned the windows; and a white marble mantelpiece, surmounted by an ormolu clock, over a

polished steel grate, gave a finish to a very pretty apartment. A sofa and several chairs in neat order would have led one to imagine, but for a few unmistakably Prussian-looking packages, of which a long pipe was one, that its privacy had not been invaded since its owner, with probably a very heavy heart, had set out, with what goods he could carry, to Metz —truly, "out of the frying-pan into the fire."

Von Schmeling had disappeared, but now returned, bringing with him a cheery-faced soldier of the guard bearing a washing-stand. "This man will be your valet now," said he, "as long as you stop with the headquarters of the 1st Army, wherever they may be." Shutting up the windows once more, and locking the door until I should return, I now set out to find and inform my companion of this crowning effort of Von Schmeling's to make us happy.

Crossing the bridge of the Moselle, I found a lady in a carriage stopped by the sentry and not allowed to pass. He was a soldier of the 28th Regiment—a great many of which regiment I knew, and almost all of whom knew me. The lady was in the deepest mourning, and bore on her countenance the most worn and woe-begone expression I ever saw. I thought I might be of service to her, and so, taking off my hat, I ventured to accost her. She replied in good English

thus: "Since Gravelotte, sir, I have been nursing different relatives wounded in that action, who were unable to return to Germany. I have buried a husband and only son, and now go to attend the only surviving male relative left to me—a dear cousin. He lies in Ars; but my *erlaubniss* is not in order, and the sentry will not let me pass." All this she said in a tone of voice which sounded dried up with grief. I told her that if she would not mind waiting, I would run up the hill to the headquarters and have it put right. But this proved unnecessary, for the instant I assured the sentry that I would guarantee that the carriage might safely be allowed to pass, he made no further objection. This was droll—a German lady stopped, and not allowed to pass, except on the assurance of an Englishman!

I found my companion still fishing. He had had no success, a flood having come down the river. It had carried away a large piece of land and a cottage since I crossed in the morning, and almost shook the bridge as it dashed against the piers in its turbulent course.

In an hour's time the "English contingent" might be seen marching out of Ars towards Jouy, preceded by two men and a stretcher by way of baggage-train.

It would be hard to picture the sorrow that the two Josins seemed to feel at our departure. Madame Josin happening to hear that the only commodity wanting at our new abode was a bed, went out while we were eating a parting meal, and got for us from a friend a splendid mattress. This luxury, rolled up and carried on the back of a sturdy *blouse*, brought up our rear.

Arrived at our new quarters, we found that in my absence Von Schmeling had supplied this want, having caused two nice little beds to be placed in the room.

We had scarcely unpacked our baggage when the sound of horses' feet brought us to the window. It was caused by the 1800 cavalry horses which Schmeling had told us of yesterday. Every other horse had on it a French prisoner. I never saw such a miserable set of horses, nor could I have believed it possible to have got together so bad a lot. The most striking and prevailing fault was "want of rib." Of course they were in wretched condition; but I am accustomed to look to a horse's frame, and not its covering. You cannot expect to get hard work out of a horse if he is not a good feeder, and I never yet knew a horse feed well if he had not *stowage*-room. I would not have given £10 for any one horse out of

the 1800 that passed me that day. They formed a striking contrast to the Uhlan escort, whose mounts, although not in the same hunt with those of our cavalry, were very serviceable-looking. There was no jeering at these unfortunate soldiers as they passed; but I saw many a Prussian run out, dodging through the horses of the escort, and hand cigars to the prisoners; and the feeling of pity, which great and good minds always accord to the unfortunate, was manifest enough in the general bearing of the crowd towards them.

We had now deserted our regiment for two days, so this afternoon we set out for their headquarters at Augny. The sun shone out well, and we had a lovely walk, enjoying immensely the grapes, which now were ripe and luscious. Though they are vastly inferior in size to our hothouse grapes, they struck me as being both thinner skinned and of better flavour. As we approached the village we heard our beautiful band playing a familiar air, which, if I remember rightly, was known to me when a child as "Don't you remember long time ago?"

We had brought from the divisional post-office, which was situated in Jouy, letters for the 1st and 2d battalions, and while my companion went to distribute these I sought the colonel. I found him sit-

ting alone, at a table which had been brought from the chateau, in a most beautiful garden. The band was close by him, and in front of him was an immensely long avenue of splendid trees, forming a vista that seemed to have its termination only when it reached Metz, and to lead straight up to the Cathedral, which appeared to tower majestically at the further end.

On the table before him was a bowl containing a most delicious compound of Moselle wine and peaches. He insisted on our sleeping at his quarters that night, and we passed a merry evening enough.

Looking for something to read before going to sleep, I came upon a curious satire on the state of French affairs. Seeing a heap of papers lying in the corner of one of the rooms that I passed through, I inspected them, and found that they were old numbers of 'L'Univers Illustré,' crammed full of pictures of the Second Empire's campaign in Italy; replete with scenes of bloodshed and destruction, which used to bear a signification only to be defined in French minds by the term *la gloire*. In another corner of the room was a pile of the periodical known as 'Le Follet'! I stole some of the sheets of these latter, on which I saw some pretty patterns, to take to my wife, and then went up to bed.

Our life ran so smoothly, now that we had the

comforts of a regular mess, that I have little of interest to relate until the 16th, if I except an act of kindness by Von During, which occurred on the 15th, and which I will here record.

On that day my companion heard from his wife, writing in great distress at not having heard from him, his letters having miscarried. She also said that she had heard that he had died from the effect of his wound, and begged of him to let her know the worst. Of course he was in a terrible state, and determined to consult our friends at headquarters if there was any possibility of sending a message by special messenger to Saarbrück, and from thence telegraphing to England.

We went straight to the headquarters of General Steinmetz, at the Rothschild Villa, and found Von During on the steps. He showed the greatest concern at my companion's story, saying, "Follow me; if it is possible to be managed, you shall send a telegram by field-post from here." We followed him into the house, and he led the way up a winding staircase to the very top. Then he ushered us into a room, in which, we perceived, was every modern appliance for the important branch of the organisation of an army called field-telegraphy. We watched a message arrive that Von During told us was coming direct from the great Von Moltke; and as the coils of paper rolled off

the machine on to the ground, it took but a small stretch of imagination to turn them into thick ropes for binding his enemies: certainly it is with these coils of paper that Von Moltke weaves his toils. The little wheel turned round and round, with a gentle "burring" noise, and silently yard after yard of message fell upon the ground, until, when it stopped, we knew that the little great man, miles away, had ceased to speak.

As there were no messages of importance to be sent, my friend was fortunate enough to be able to transmit the few words that could carry so much comfort to his home; and we came away, thanking Von During heartily, if only for showing us a sight that was held sacred from public gaze.

On the 16th, while sitting in our little *salon* chatting with Von Schmeling, who had come to pay us a visit, our servant, whom we had sent to the post-office, brought back some letters for us. One for me brought bad tidings of my wife's health. I saw at once the necessity for my leaving my Prussian friends—for a time, at all events.

I suppose Von Schmeling must have observed the expression of my face fall. He expressed a hope that I had no bad news. I told him that I had, and the nature of it, when the kind man said at once, "We must send

you off at once; but you have been so long with us, perhaps you shall want some money?" Now, it so happened that money could not be transmitted with safety through the field-post from anywhere except Germany, and I had to make a complicated arrangement by which money was paid to my account at a German bank, and from thence paid, by the kind permission of the colonel, to the paymaster, or *zahlmeister*, as he was called, of our battalion of the 33d, who would then pay it to me. It had not yet arrived, and my funds would have been totally insufficient to have taken me to Belgium. I was quite taken aback at this proof of Von Schmeling's thoughtful open-heartedness, and positively could not answer him. He pulled out his purse and placed 100 thalers at my disposal, saying, when I tried to thank him, "Do not say a word, my dear friend. I should be unworthy of the name of a man if, having it in my power to do so, I failed to remove any obstacle to a husband's reaching his wife under such circumstances. See, would you prefer gold?" he added, rolling on to the table some coins neatly wrapped up in paper, "these are double Fredericks; my wife packed them for me when I was going to the war in '66, but I never used them." If any one who reads this has been in the same position of being unable to reach

a sick wife on account of want of funds, he will understand and sympathise with the feeling of gratitude that induces me to record this graceful act of kind-heartedness.

As there was no immediate necessity for my return, I determined to devote the next day to visiting old haunts and scenes around Metz; and then if the regimental *zahlmeister* had not by that time received my money, I would draw upon Von Schmeling, and set out for lands of peace on the following day, which would be the 18th of September.

When Von Schmeling heard that I had elected to stay one day more, he was overjoyed, and said: "I have a day's leave to-morrow to go and search for the son of one of our guards who was wounded at Gravelotte, and has been lost sight of. I will supply you with horses, and we will take a long ride together to the far end of the battle-field of the 18th of August, by St Privat and Roncourt, and I will show you my poor brother's grave." There could be no better termination to my very comprehensive, if not very long, sojourn with the Prussians, as this would take me past all the foreposts with which I was so familiar. Von Schmeling did not know the west side of Metz well, not having been there since the battle of Gravelotte, so we should form apt guides for him.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE morning of the 18th dawned with that delicious crispness in the air which just falls short of frostiness. At eight o'clock we were breakfasting in the mess, and having pocketed some bread and ham for the way, by nine o'clock we were mounted on three handsome horses belonging to Von Schmeling, ready for the start. We were accompanied by two soldiers of the Guard Artillery, and armed with revolvers in case of accidents.

We rode down the High Street, over the bridge, and were soon trotting briskly through Ars and along the road towards Metz. At the battery marked in the map we turned off to our left, after examining the earthwork thoroughly. It was simple enough, but looked very efficacious. They evidently feared the possibility of a cavalry charge over the valley, which was here perfectly level, as the work, which was open behind, and looked something like an exaggerated

steeplechase bank, had for about 40 yards in front of it holes dug all over the ground about the size of large buckets. These would have brought any body of horsemen attempting to charge the battery most effectually to grief, as they were not apparent until you were close upon them.

Von Schmeling was most anxious to see the Vaux outposts, as they were the most advanced we had; so we led him up the hill and through the kitchen-garden of the chateau in which we had been quartered with the 33d Regiment. Arrived at the top of the kitchen-garden, we found, as usual, a double post. Before going outside the walls we took the precaution of descending from our horses, as, had we showed ourselves on them to the French sentries, who were not more than 700 to 1000 yards distant, we should have at once been converted into targets. Walking towards Metz for about 100 yards, concealed by the vineyards, we came to a single Prussian forepost standing on a slight elevation behind a splendid Scotch fir, and commanding a glorious view of the whole valley.

About 900 yards off was a little chapel, situated in the corner of a vineyard sloping down the hill from Jussy. In this chapel two French soldiers were situated on forepost duty. Presently we saw one of them walk quietly down through the vineyard to a tree

which stood exactly in the middle of it. These fellows had learned completely to despise the Prussian needle-gun except at comparatively close quarters. Returning to the picket, we suggested a way through the vines by which a couple of Prussians might easily get within shot of him when he tried to return to the chapel. Two men at once set out, and we soon lost sight of them in the bright green foliage. We now returned to the Scotch fir to watch the development of the plot, and had only just arrived when we observed with our glasses that the Frenchman, having supplied himself with apples from the tree, was on the point of returning. Hardly had he shown himself clear of the tree when crack, crack went two rifles just below us. He was not struck, though at first we thought he was; for he dropped all his apples and jumped back to his hiding-place behind the tree, from whence he reconnoitred where the shots came from. He was quite helpless, for the Prussians were completely hidden; besides which, he had left his rifle at the chapel. We watched him for a long time, or rather the tree behind which he had hidden himself; but he knew better than to trust himself within shot of the *zündnadelgewehr*, and we knew well that the two Prussians would watch him until night if necessary; so we rode back through the kitchen-garden to pay Joseph a visit, who, as

the reader may suppose, did not dismiss us hungry or thirsty. This was the last time I saw old Joseph; but the likeness of his honest face helps to fill a pleasant page of memory's album.

Now we rode up over the hill, through the Bois de Vaux, and soon came to the opening in the wood towards Jussy. We did not wait to inspect the French foreposts at this point, but, digging our spurs into our nags, galloped through the gap before they could have been aware of our proximity. Arrived on the heights, we found the Hessian troops occupying precisely the same position that we had. A battalion was being inspected by a very young and pleasant-looking general. Von Schmeling exchanged a few words with him, and then we rode on. He then said, "That was our Prince Louis, who married your English Princess."

Winding our way through some of the rifle-pits, jumping over others which here formed a perfect labyrinth, we came to our old friend the battery of 12-pounder brass guns. It seemed quite strange for none of the men about it to recognise one. The next point of interest which we came to was St Hubert; and it was here that Von Schmeling narrated to us the story of the young artillery officer who refused to bring his guns out

of action. And now from Moscau all to the north was new to me; for, though I was under some of the heaviest fire at the battle of the 18th, being only an ordinary mortal and not a "special correspondent," I found it impossible to be ubiquitous on a battle-field of three miles' extent, and thus only witnessed that portion of it in the immediate neighbourhood of Moscau, Malmaison, St Hubert, and the Bois des Ognons and Vaux. So we came to Leipzig and many little hamlets, none of which call for special remark, save that everything in the shape of a wall showed plain evidence of having been turned to account by the French for desperate resistance.

Next we arrived at Amanvilliers Grange, which is too remarkable a structure to pass without some notice. It is a square building enclosing a courtyard. Each side has a frontage of about 60 yards, and at each corner is a round tower, with the peculiar extinguisher top which forms so striking a feature in most French chateaus. The whole building is surrounded by a moat, and in old days the capture of it would have entailed a regular siege. Even against the Prussian artillery it formed a strong point for the French, and was greatly instrumental in the vast slaughter of Prussians which took place on the 18th of August.

At last we arrived at St Privat. Here we got into a perfect stone-wall country, and Von Schmeling, who had latterly lost his cheerful manner, now took the lead; and following him, we presently came to a little walled enclosure that proved to be a newly-made burial-ground. In a corner of it were deposited the remains of Von Schmeling's brother, who had been a colonel in the Guard Artillery. There were twelve other graves of brother officers lying in a cluster around. We all descended, and Von Schmeling, baring his head, entered; we stopped behind, unwilling to intrude on the sacred interview. Presently he came to the entrance and asked us to come in. "There," said he, pointing to a grave on which stood a roughly-hewn wooden cross, "lies all that remains of a dear brother. Is it not hard?—one brother shot dead here, another shot through the body at Sedan, and not expected to live. But now I will leave you here. I must go and see if I can get tidings of the young officer of whom I am come in search."

He turned to a village, and I now had time to examine the little graveyard. Rank grass abounded in it, but there were no graves save in the corner that I have mentioned. In the walls were great holes or gashes, rent by Prussian shells endeavouring to dislodge the French tirailleurs who lined them and

poured destruction on the Guard Artillery as it advanced from the direction of St Marie. In many places the stones were disfigured with blood, sometimes mixed with hair. No wonder that the Prussian loss was so great!

No one who has seen the position assigned for Steinmetz to take on that day will blame him for the number of troops he lost there, no matter what his antecedents may be.

It was at this point that the French right was turned. Far and wide lay evidences of destruction. If you did not see a grave, you would behold a dark blue coat, a piece of red cloth, a helmet, or a shako, dotted over the field, until they faded into distance. The wall of the graveyard furthest from the Prussian advance had evidently been used to shelter the wounded, and to attend to their requirements; for all along this were strewed pieces of bloody linen and tufts of charpie reddened with gore.

Presently Von Schmeling came back. His efforts had been fruitless; and he now went to take a farewell look at his brother's grave, which he probably would never again set eye on. We were inside the enclosure this time, and I was much struck with the simple way in which he stood at the foot of the little mound bareheaded, and read a few prayers from a

book which he drew from his pocket. Then stooping, he plucked some of the blades of grass from the grave, which he placed in his pocket-book, and from another part of the ground took a plant of larkspur and placed it at the foot of the cross. Had you seen the joy with which he welcomed a little piece of wild heartsease that I discovered and offered to him to plant, you would have said that tender, gentle feelings of a woman were component parts in the character of this man, who had proved himself a brave soldier. With an attempted smile on his face, and on his lips the words, I have no doubt, "He is very happy now, poor fellow!" he turned to the gate. We followed him, and were all soon in a brisk canter across country towards St Marie, having first gone as far north as Malancourt.

Just as we were leaving this latter place one of the most interesting events of the whole ride took place. Von Schmeling happened to look round, and immediately called to us to look back also. One of the soldier-servants was behind some way, and stationary by his side was another man on horseback. Their bridles hung down loosely, and the two rough soldiers were hugging each other with apparently the greatest joy. Von Schmeling was puzzled at first what to make of it; when,

suddenly exclaiming "I know what it is—this man is my servant's brother, whom he has not seen since the 18th of August, and whom we all believed to have been killed"—rode back and shook the fellow heartily by the hand. The two brothers rode on behind us for a long while, until the lost-and-found one turned back.

Half-way between St Marie and Verneville we came upon one of those heaps of uniforms, &c., of such frequent occurrence. We all dismounted here to find a suitable relic of the ride. I had a curious illustration of the miserable proportions of a French soldier at this point. Having a chassepot rifle, I was anxious to secure a sword-bayonet. As I was carrying several things in my hands, and constantly having to ride over stone walls, I endeavoured to fasten a French belt containing the sword round my waist. I tried fully a dozen out of the heap, not one of which could I make meet. Now, as far as height goes, I am under the middle size; my measurements are not small, but I am not corpulent. So my experience was that the French line soldier was not, save exceptionally, a fine specimen of humanity.

Amongst other things, I took the spike from a Prussian helmet which had been cloven through by a sword twice to the ring, but this had always pro-

tected the head. Having escaped this danger, the poor fellow had evidently succumbed to a bullet, for two little holes below the level of the head marked the ingress and egress of one. Nothing is better in the way of a military headpiece than the Prussian helmet. It is very light; and though a bullet will go through it, of course, as if it were paper, the spike will turn any number of sword-cuts. It is generally supposed to be heavy, but no one will say this if he has once held one in his hand.

At a point between Verneville and Amanvilliers, Von Schmeling pointed out the spot where the Zouaves captured, at the point of the bayonet, two Prussian cannon, which were never recaptured. He described the charge as irresistibly brilliant; and I remarked that I did not believe that amateur soldiers could ever stand against the cold steel of professional ones, whatever they might do with the rifle at long distances. I believe I am right; but then cold steel hardly ever comes into play now. Of the thousands of sword-bayonets captured by the Prussians in this war I do not think fifty will have blood-rust on them.

Now we turned through Verneville to Doncourt, and from that village rode hard across country through St Marcel, and so came into the Verdun road to the west of Gravelotte. Doncourt and St Marcel were occu-

pied on the 18th by the 9th and 10th Corps, and were in line of the French retreat on the 16th. We now drew rein, and consulted whether we should go back to Ars the way we came, or through Gorze and Noveaut. We settled on the latter route.

We cantered across the, to us, too familiar piece of ground between the Verdun road and the entrance to the Bois des Ognons. Had we kept to the road, we must have gone out of our way as far as Rezonville, and encountered the long string of magadenda waggons which, as usual, was wending its way to and from the bivouacs at Gravelotte.

On entering the wood we became aware that the way before us was blocked—at first, it appeared, by a body of *polizei;* but we soon made out that these were only the rearguard of an escort of prisoners from Sedan. They moved slowly, for they had come thirty miles since daybreak, and were to bivouac a little way outside Gorze, towards Noveaut. When they had passed through the wood and out into the open, we galloped forward, the better to see the long line. O reader! this was indeed a heart-breaking sight, to see these splendid soldiers—6000 of them—tramping on with enduring patience to all the disgrace and hardships of a war captivity: offered up first to the god of war by an arrogant and shallow-pated Ministry;

betrayed afterwards by the incompetence of their own generals.

They turned off to avoid Gorze. We rode on to the town; and for my part I shunned the sight of this long, sad, weary line more than any other I had seen during the war.

We were not sorry to rest a short time at the above town, paying a visit to a young doctor whom we had made great friends with during our residence at Jaquin's. He lived at the hospital, and many a cup of coffee I have enjoyed in his snug little apothecary's shop. We made inquiries about our different friends in hospital. Some had gone to a home upon earth, others to a home above; and some—the least to be envied—remained here with their wounds insufficiently healed to allow them to go to Fatherland, but not severe enough to enable them to get to heaven.

It was late when we set out from Gorze to Noveaut, so we jogged on rather quickly, and soon arrived at the latter place.

Here Von Schmeling suddenly remembered that he had omitted to possess himself of the sign and countersign of the day, and as he was not known to the commandant at this town, he did not see his way to finding it out, especially as they were always suspicious of parting with it to any one after dark. "If the

commandant were to see you," he said, "I should not have a chance; so do you wait here, and I will go and see what I can do with him." He rode off, and quickly returned with the words—one of which was, I remember, "Reichart," the other I have forgotten. We soon came to the pontoon across the Moselle to Corny, and here we were challenged. The mode of giving and exacting the passwords was as follows: "Halt!" shouted a sentry. "Officer," Von Schmeling answered. Sometimes that was sufficient; but the night was dark, and the sentry heard that there were several of us, so he went on, "Give the sign, officer." "Reichart," said Von Schmeling. "Advance, Reichart, and give the countersign." Von Schmeling made rather a hash of this word; but the sentry, seeing matters were all right, allowed us to pass, and we soon crossed over the hollow-sounding pontoon bridge, which was shaken by the surging and swollen river. We were twice more challenged, and nothing more of interest occurred before reaching Jouy, save that at Corny we saw against the sky the duskily-defined outline of two dark objects, which we knew were the bodies of two peasants hanging from a tree.

We were thankful to find that the mess kitchen was not closed. Entering it we ordered some steaks and bread-and-butter, and noticed by the clock that it

was just 10 P.M. Thus we had been in the saddle for thirteen hours; and in spite of my having had four legs to trust to for carrying me instead of two, it was the hardest day I had during the campaign. It may interest the reader to trace the course of this last ride that I took while staying with the Prussians in Frankreich, when I tell him that it went through the heart of two of the greatest battle-fields of modern ages. It is marked on the map.

As I ate my supper that night, my feelings resembled more those that I can remember having when a boy at a breaking-up feast, for by this time to-morrow I knew I should be far on my way towards home; and though my schooling in this instance was self-imposed, I had had nearly enough of a voluntary military education. I was the happier at the idea of leaving, too, as I felt that, no matter what happened now, I had seen all that, practically speaking, had been or was to be done by the Prussian army of the Moselle. Another thing, correspondents now began to come straggling up, like the tail of a hunting-field after the fox has been worried; so, altogether, I have to thank dame Fortune for giving me a very neat finish to a period which must always rank foremost among the interesting ones that I may pass through in life.

I found myself a little stiff the next morning, so did not rise early, and was not ready for the start until eleven o'clock. The old mare, which had been eating her head off—there was little else for her to eat—for the last fortnight, was brought into requisition.

Von Schmeling placed a trusty man and horse from his regiment at my disposal, to carry my pack and by way of escort, and it now only remained for me to return my pass to, and take leave of, General von Göben, if I could be so fortunate as to see him. I should have to pass his headquarters in going towards Augny, through which village my road lay, and where I intended to eat a parting luncheon with my colonel; so, with no words of thanks to Von Schmeling but a squeeze of the hand, which told him, I believe, all that I felt, I set out towards Courcelles, my companion walking with me as far as Augny.

What an inefficient word the verb "to thank" is rendered by its necessarily wide application! "I thank" a person "very much" for handing me the potatoes at lunch. I can make use of no stronger expression towards a man for rendering me such services as did Von Schmeling. No wonder railway guards and others are not content with the hackneyed phrase as a remuneration for their efforts; it might save the

pockets of railway travellers if our etymologists would only invent a more grateful-sounding word.

We stopped at General von Göben's, and on asking of an orderly if we could see him, were told that he was engaged, but that Oberst von Wittensdorf would see us. This kind man with the grave face received us pleasantly, as usual, and was good enough to express regret at the cause of our visit. I handed him the pass; and he said, "I will take it to General von Göben; I am sure he will see you before you go." He left the room, but returning instantly, bade us follow him. He opened the door of the room opposite, and entering, we found ourselves in the presence of the general. You may search the world far and wide, and you will not find a face so indicative of amiability as his. It is a well-known fact that this characteristic leavens all his actions; and those officers who are subordinate to him have good reason to congratulate themselves.

I told him that I was anxious to bid him farewell before leaving the scenes that he had been the means of my witnessing. He replied, extending his hand, "I am very sorry that you are leaving us, Mr Winn, and trust that you will carry away with you a pleasing recollection of us." Few words,—but as courteous and kind as they were few.

Then he suggested that I should require a pass to take me to Trier, and gave Oberst von Wittensdorf the necessary instructions to have one prepared, to which he afterwards affixed his signature. Both pressed us to stay to breakfast, which was just being served; but it was nearly one o'clock, and I had to say farewell to my dear friends of the 33d at Augny. So we resumed our journey, I carrying in my heart no ordinary feelings of gratitude towards General von Göben and his *état* major, Oberst von Wittensdorf.

On hearing that I was going to leave, Colonel von Henning expressed great concern, and at luncheon proposed my health in a little speech which I could not understand, but which my friend told me was couched in very affectionate terms. When the time for leaving my good and true friends came, he did not say a word, but quietly coming up to me, embraced me and kissed me on each cheek, so simply, so kindly, as to cause me to lose sight of the strangeness of this custom. Then more hearty shakes of the hand from great good-natured Lieutenant von Homburg, jolly little Gatung, and Hauptmann von Wabsall, and then I was again on my journey, my comrade still accompanying me to the first fence, for we had to ride across country.

Here I will take leave of him too, and in doing so I take leave of a very pleasant, unselfish, and well-in-

formed companion. Of muscular frame and stout constitution, he always worked hard at the arduous duty he had undertaken, and never threw away an opportunity of gleaning information which might be of service to his country, and which, as an old officer, he was thoroughly competent to acquire.

If I have dwelt at too great length on the different leave-takings, it is because my pen loves to linger writing accounts which form such strong testimony of the good hearts of those I have left behind in Frankreich.

At this time I had not with me the excellent map which accompanies this volume, and had only a general idea of the direction in which I had to ride for Courcelles. Eventually I found my way there with some difficulty, passing through Marly, Pouilly, and Chesny. From the latter place I nearly rode into the French lines, but a pocket-compass saved me from this mishap, and I got on to the highroad as far as Cheval Rouge; at this point I saw the field-telegraph wire running across the road and striking into the country, and, suggesting to the Prussian soldier who was behind that by following it we must eventually come to the railway, jumped over the ditch which divided the road from the fields, and in an hour's time reached Sorbey. At this point the telegraph crossed the highroad to Metz,

which led through Courcelles; so we quitted it, and following the latter, soon reached our destination. It was quite six o'clock when we arrived.

I went at once to the station commandant, and showing my pass to Trier from General von Göben, asked when there would be a train. There was none, he told me, until six o'clock the following morning. On asking where I was to sleep, or if there was any inn at Courcelles, he smiled, and—saying, "Come with me, I will show you the only hotel that I know of in this place"—led me to a little shed on the opposite side of the platform. A facsimile of it may be seen on the platforms of any of our smaller railway stations. Here, upon some straw, which I shared with a German student, having first supped by the fire of a magadenda, of whom there was a perfect depot here, I slept on the night of the 18th. I tried hard to sell the old mare to some of these magadenda; but since the capitulation of Sedan, horse-flesh had become so cheap that I failed completely in my negotiations (fifty thalers was the price I put upon her); so I made her a present to my faithful guard, to make what he could out of, having first taken off the saddle and bridle given to me by the seigneur of the Chateau St Catherine.

The next morning at seven o'clock I was on my road to Saarbrück, sitting on my knapsack in a large lug-

gage-van, having for companions a man sick of the cholera, a woman who would keep on offering me plums and eau de vie, as though to reduce me to the same state, and several magadenda men and women going to fetch supplies. So it will be seen that I did not leave the Prussian army the last time in either as good company or in so luxurious a conveyance as I joined.

Nothing of interest occurred until reaching Forbach. Here the train stopped, and I thought it would never go on. Presently a guard came and asked me for my ticket. I told him that I had a free pass from Von Göben, and showed it to him. He wanted me to pay as well; but I knew better than to do so. I jumped down from the carriage and went to the station commandant. When I explained my case to him, he at once had an addition made to my pass, which prevented my being again annoyed until I reached Saarbrück.

On my return to the waggon I had the most serious disturbance that occurred to me during the whole of my stay with the Prussians. The waggon was surrounded by twenty or thirty soldiers, who were seeing a comrade off, and who were all more or less the worse of liquor. They hoisted me into the waggon friendly enough; but guess my horror on getting there when I

beheld at the far end a very tipsy soldier brandishing my revolver, which he had picked up out of the corner in which it had been lying, and which I knew to be loaded, and pointing it at every one, myself included. There was no time to hesitate, so without any exclamation that might have prepared him I sprang at him, and fortunately succeeded in snatching the weapon out of his hand. Being one of Montigny's patent, it did not take me a quarter of a second to empty its chambers on to the floor of the waggon, when I had instantly to turn and defend myself. The soldier, angry at my treatment of him, seized me by the waist the instant he had recovered from his surprise, trying to throw me, and crying, "Here is a Frenchman with loaded arms on him—we will hang him;" for such was the fate assigned to any one carrying arms who were not Prussian or French soldiers, the precaution being a very necessary one.

Finding the fellow would not let me go, and getting angry, I perpetrated upon him a little trick taught me by a Devonshire gentleman, the effect of which was to send him flying through the door of the luggage-van to the ground, carrying with him with the impetus two or three of his brother soldiers who were struggling to climb in to his assistance.

This was a foolish thing to have done, and it raised

the very devil among them. Some ran off for their rifles, others stood raging at the door; but none dared attempt to climb into the waggon again, for I had the advantage of them, strategically speaking. I did not see the fun of waiting until the rifles came, and was debating in my mind what course to pursue, when I saw a *feldwebel* forcing his way through the soldiers who now surrounded the waggon. I joyfully recognised his face as that of a man to whom I had recounted some of my adventures in the morning, and explained the beautiful breech-action of my revolver.

"Do not fear, sir," he said; "but let me come up into the carriage."

I did so—and, turning to the men outside, he told them that I was an Englishman who had been helping (?) the Germans throughout the campaign. Some of them immediately were gained over to my cause; others still held out that I ought to be hanged for carrying arms when I was not a German. Eight or nine now sprang up and stood before the door of the waggon, swearing that I should not be harmed; and a fight, I think, would have ensued had not the commandant of the station, whose office was just opposite, sent down a corporal to see what was the matter. When he learned the

cause of the noise he came out of his office and said, "I have seen this Englishman's pass; it is in order, and signed by General von Göben; I will hear nothing against him, and if you do not all disperse I will have you arrested and tried for insubordination." This had the desired effect; the soldiers, friends and foes, went away, looking ashamed of themselves, and in another half-hour we were at Saarbrück. On the platform at this station I found England well represented; for here was a gentleman well known for the tact he displayed in negotiating certain territorial cessions made by Great Britain some few years ago, and with him was one of our distinguished senator Queen's Counsels. In their society I finished the journey, *viâ* Trier and Luxembourg, to Belgium; my wife having, with true feminine persistency, refused to leave the Continent without me.

As I was leaving Luxembourg, a curious incident happened. A Frenchman rushed up to me and said, "Sir, what will you take for that sword you carry in your hand?" alluding to the souvenir of the sad scene on the Gorze battle-field which I was carrying. I replied that I did not trade in things of that sort. "I know that, sir," answered the other; "but name what price you like for this and I will give it." We left him on the platform still urging his request.

CHAPTER XXII.

I CANNOT close my narrative without recording my surprise at the animus that appears to be springing up in the public mind, in defiance alike of reason and justice, against the Prussian rulers for wishing to secure a lasting peace to their people by the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine.

It is in defiance of reason; for if it be unreasonable of Bismark to require Alsace and Lorraine, it is unreasonable of him to wish to protect his country against the terrible *vendetta* that all must feel has been kindled against it for avenging itself so thoroughly against an aggressive and bullying neighbour. It is in defiance of justice; for surely no prize was ever more fairly won or gallantly fought for.

There are those who argue, or rather assert—for there is no ground for argument—that Bismark, with his usual adroitness, welcomed the struggle while seemingly shunning it. When it can be shown that the

Prussian rulers could have done more to allay the insatiable craving for war that appeared to have smitten their neighbours like a disease, or that the French rulers could have done more to aggravate it, then it will be time to accuse Count Bismark of welcoming the approach of sorrow and death amongst his master's subjects. We may all have our belief that Bismark was glad of the opportunity of bringing to an issue the long-pending struggle; but we have no reason for the belief, beyond feeling that he must have known that it was the best policy that he could pursue. We have no act of his in the negotiations which preceded the war to prove to us, or even make us suppose, that he believed it to be the best policy to provoke a challenge. On the contrary, all that we have before our eyes is that everything was done that could be done, consistent with the dignity of a first-class power, to avoid war. To my way of thinking, the proverb, "If you want to hang a dog, any rope will do to hang him by," never had a better illustration than the way in which the war was forced on Prussia against her will. Who can deny it, save an infatuated Frenchman?

Can it be said, then, according to the laws of reason or justice, because the French choose to go on being thrashed, or rather because the gentlemen of the

pavement choose it for them, rather than yield what they have fairly lost, that therefore the King of Prussia is cruel to continue the war, or that Count Bismark shows himself greedy of territorial acquisition because his terms of peace are simply the only terms that could possibly insure a lasting one? I as much as any one regret to see Prussia further strengthened by the annexation of two such fortresses as Metz and Strasbourg; for while she does not increase her power as a friendly ally by the addition, she increases immensely her power as an enemy in case in after years she may cast a loving eye upon the Belgian seaboard. But this view of the case furnishes no argument against the annexation. The time is past and gone long enough when as a nation we could veto any action on the part of a first-class power that threatened our interests. Not having the "might," then, to make this an argument, I cannot see what "right" we have to maintain any other.

If any one argues that the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine is not necessary to insure lasting peace to Prussia, it must be he who does not know what the French feeling is now. It is a *vendetta* feeling, which nothing would hold in check were it not associated with weakness. It is useless to say France is crippled by the war, and would be still more so by the indem-

nity. What should we think of Count Bismark, what would history say of him, were he to so far ignore the future of his country as to be content with an indemnity, when he went to war with the acknowledgment that he was going to fight for a "lasting peace"? What lasting guarantee is there in an indemnity from a country like France, or the destruction of an army with such a population to recruit from?

There is but one way that I can see by which Count Bismark might secure protection for his country, and yet not annex more than half of Alsace and Lorraine. It is—for him to annex the northern halves of those two provinces with Metz, and to give up Strasbourg and the southern halves. Thus each nation would have a check upon the other. But inasmuch as France is never likely to require to have a check upon Prussia, except to prevent her defending herself from future retaliation, it can hardly be expected that Count Bismark, being master of the situation, would entertain such a scheme.

Again, much has been written lately about the cruelty of the Prussians. Surely if the French leaders consider that, rather than acknowledge a fair defeat, it is expedient to carry on a guerilla war, they must expect to meet with the usual mode of stamping out that system. Or do they, with their wonted ego-

tism, imagine that because this guerilla fighting—by which Prussian officers are assassinated from hedges, and detachments butchered from treachery—is carried on by them, that therefore it is inaugurated as a civilised and lawful mode of warfare?

It would be a waste of words to endeavour to persuade people with French sympathies that the Prussians have not been needlessly cruel,—it would be merely running one's head against the stone-wall of prejudice. But I would ask those who may be wavering in their opinions, and liable to fall victims to the partiality which sympathy for the defeated begets, to pay attention to the following sentences. Having been with the Prussians through three of their bloodiest battles, I have learned two things of the soldiers of the army: 1st, That no amount of bloodshed or obstinate fair resistance will lead the private soldiers into acts of wanton cruelty. They do not become drunk with blood poured out, as we have read of soldiers being. With the finish of the fight comes an end to their passion, and rioting and love of rapine are not in them. Doubtless there are exceptions to these statements, sufficient to prove the rule. 2dly, That the officers, seeing how these poor men have been forced from their homes to meet a wanton—oh, how wanton!—foe, are determined in an uncompromisingly

just way to protect them from falling victims to irregular as well as regular war, by any means that they deem the most effectual, in spite of the scowl of prejudice or the cry of partial pity. Are they not better judges of what steps are necessary to protect their troops than we?—and are they not right to take those steps? It seems to be forgotten altogether that harsh measures need not be unjust ones; and the most that an unprejudiced man can say about certain measures, though he may grieve over the account of them, is that he was in no position to judge whether they were necessitated by the circumstances. I write these lines, believing it to be a duty of every one who has any opportunity and authority, to endeavour to dissipate the cloud of dislike towards Prussia that is springing up in England. Nature and expediency alike cry out that we must be friends. And indeed the nations have but to know each other to love each other.

In all probability, before these pages become public property, the world will know whether General Trochu's scheme to break the blockade was of sufficient promise to justify the Provisional Government in subjecting their compatriots to so much further misery as has ensued since Sedan. So surely as the Imperial Ministry are responsible for the commencement of this wanton war, so surely are M. Gambetta and his colleagues

responsible for the continuance of it. If the end justifies their conduct, Europe for the first time will have cause to respect a French republic: if not, more than ever will that form of government become synonymous with disorder and want of power.

THE END.

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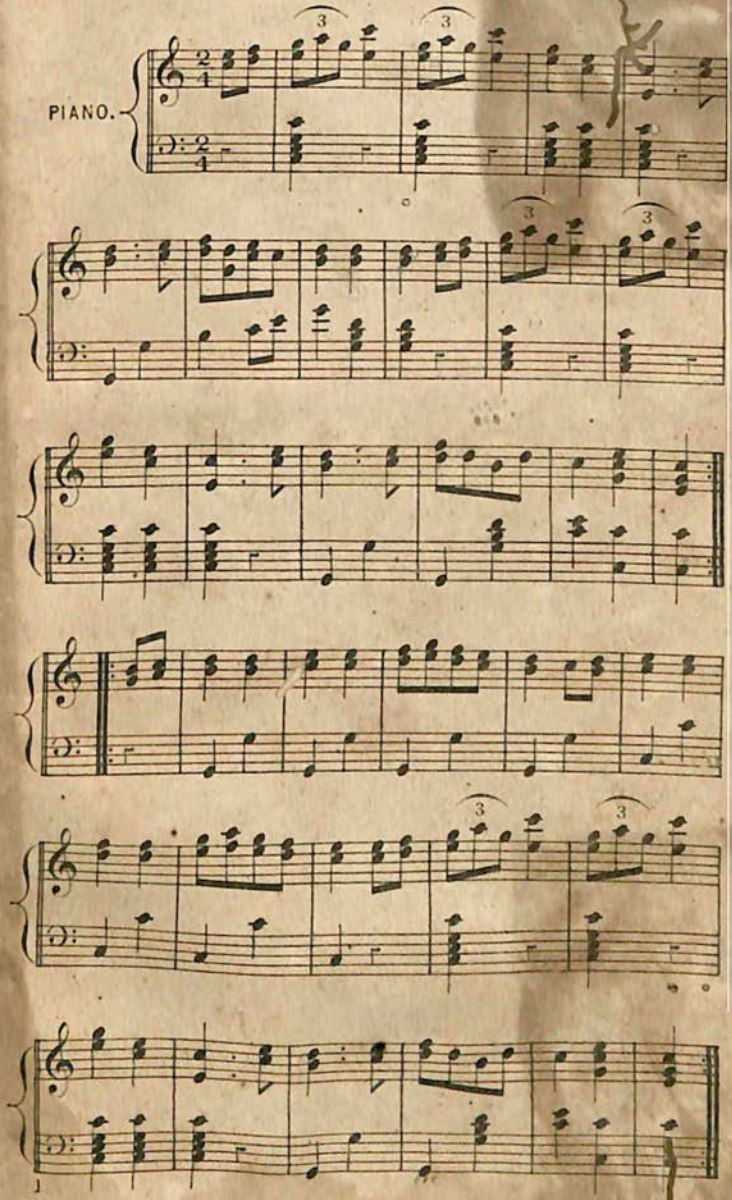
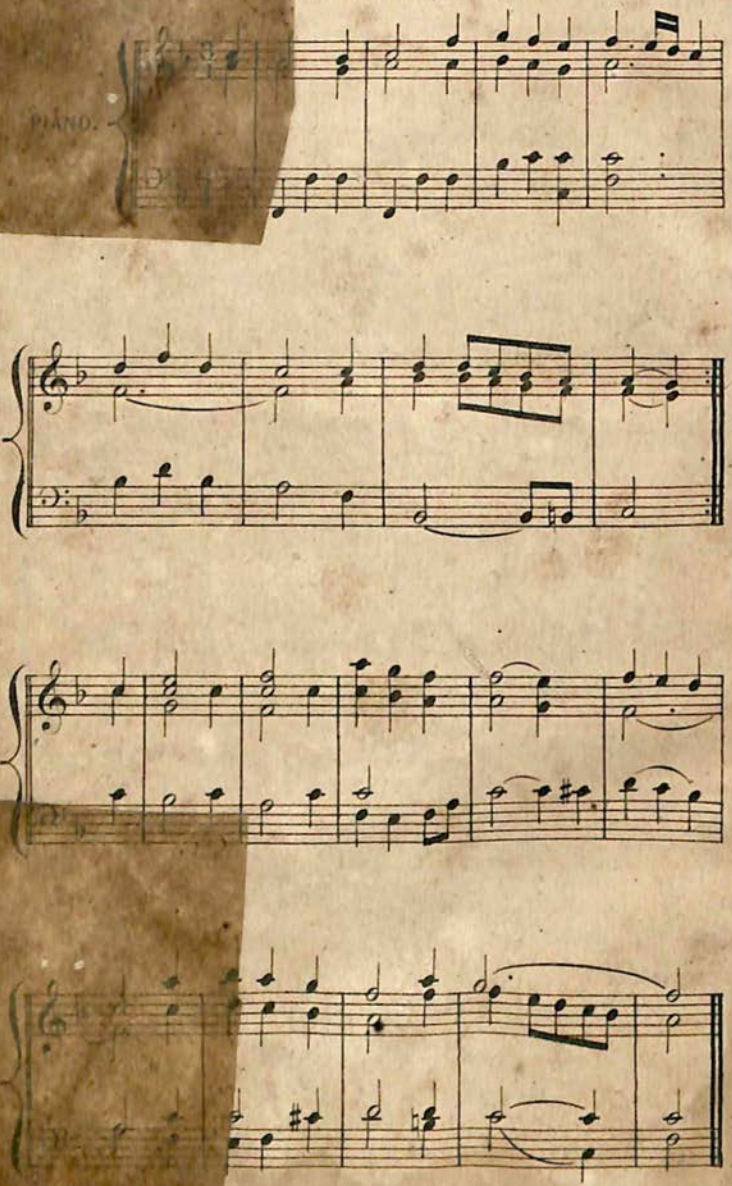
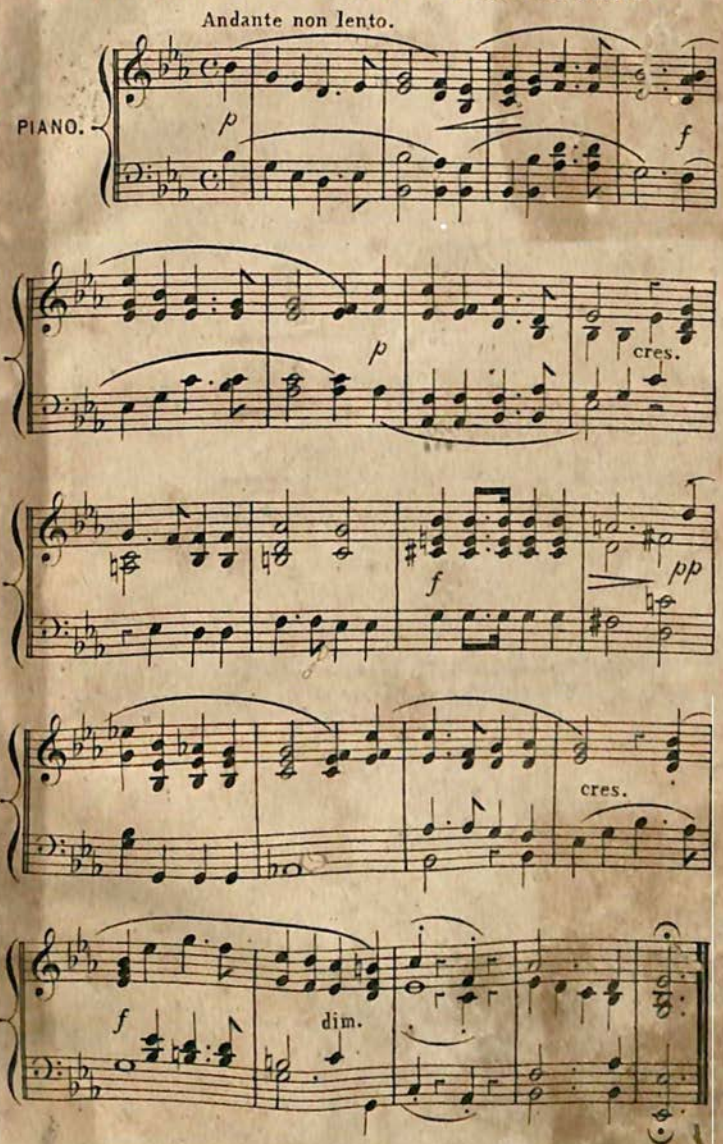
PLAN OF THE COUNTRY ROUND METZ ENLARGED FROM THE PLAN SUPPLIED TO THE ARMY BY THE PRUSSIAN GOVERNMENT.

Preussischer Zapfenstreich.

Abend-Gebet

NACH DEM ZAPFENSTREICH.

Abschied vom Walde.

("O Thäler weit, o Höhen.")

VON FELIX MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY.

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